INDIA'S STRUGGLE

FOR

SWARAJ

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

THE HON. SIR P. C. SETHNA, KT. O.B.E

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India's Struggle for Swaraj

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G. A NATESAN & CO.,
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1930.

AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER

Bande Mataram

(HAIL, MOTHERLAND)

FOREWORD.

I have known Mr. R. G. Pradhan, the author of this book, intimately, for several years, ever since a happy coincidence brought us together at the Provincial Liberal Conference held in Bombay in 1922. He moved a resolution appealing to the people of India to elevate the condition of the depressed classes, and his speech impressed me so much that I sought his acquaintance; and since then, I have known him closely as a publicist, and watched his career with keen interest and sympathy. He has been an elected member of the Bombay Legislative Council since 1923, and distinguished himself there by his eloquence, balanced judgment, close study of public questions and devotion to public interests. He is an assiduous and careful student of Indian affairs, and of Constitutional Law, history, movements and questions. In this book, he has traced the course of the Indian movement for responsible Government and Dominion status, from its beginning to the recent Viceregal pronouncement declaring that Dominion status is the political and constitutional goal of India. The reader will find ample evidence of his balanced, critical judgment in its pages. His estimate of the various reforms introduced by Parliament from time to time is marked by fairness and much critical acumen. His analysis of the Non-co-operation movement, started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, and his comments thereon are penetrating and thoughtful. He has shown that the Indian Nationalist movement is not a mere political movement, but a movement of the soul of Modern India for its fullest self-realization in all

aspects of national and international life. The book is a valuable contribution to an understanding of the forces that have been working in India, since the introduction of British rule, and, more particularly, of the movement for achieving political freedom and equality; and there can be no doubt that Mr. Pradhan has rendered a distinct service to the cause of India—and I may add, to the cause of the British Commonwealth of Nations—by writing it.

India is on the eve of momentous, constitutional changes; and it is quite likely that as a result of the deliberations of the proposed Round Table Conference, the achievement of responsible Government and Dominion status may soon become an accomplished fact. At all events, we all fervently hope so. At this juncture, Mr. Pradhan's book will be found useful by all those who wish to obtain a clear understanding of the struggle for Swaraj, or responsible Government and Dominion status, which India has carried on for the last half a century. The members of the present British Parliament, the first to be elected by the new-born democracy of Great Britain, will soon be called upon to discharge perhaps the greatest responsibility that can rest upon an Imperial democracy; and, they will derive from Mr. Pradhan's book considerable help in deciding in what spirit it will be their duty to approach and consider the political and constitutional problem of India. This much may be said with certainty that, with the satisfactory solution of the two great problems by which the British Parliament is faced at present, the problem of Egypt and the problem of India, the integrity and permanence of the British Commonwealth of Nations will be placed upon firm foundations, and it will become the greatest instrument of promoting the peace, progress, and

happiness of the world. To all those who are keenly interested in such a development of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and in the attainment by India of her legitimate place in that Commonwealth, as an equal partner, I feel great pleasure in recommending Mr. Pradhan's book, " India's Struggle for SWARAJ".

BOMBAY, *Christmas Eve, 1929.* | PHIROZE SETHNA.

PREFACE

I have tried in this book to trace the course of India's struggle for Swaraj, or full responsible government and Dominion status, from its beginning to the Declaration of 31st October 1929, made by His Excellency Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India, with the authority of His Majesty's Government, to the effect that Dominion status is the political and constitutional goal of India. History has witnessed many a great and glorious struggle waged by different nations for the attainment of freedom, national independence and constitutional government. The classic examples of such struggles during the last century are the Italian movement for liberation associated with the great names of Mazzini, Cavour, Garibaldi and King Victor Emmanuel, and the Japanese movement for constitutional government led by Count Itagaki, Count Okuma and other leaders of the Restoration. The former is one of the epics of history; the latter is the first effort made by an Asiatic nation, accustomed to personal rule ever since the dawn of its history, to liberalise its Government on Western lines and endow itself with a constitution. The Indian movement for *Swaraj* is an expression of the same spirit of freedom and national self-realization which inspired the Italians and the Japanese, and which, more or less, inspires all Asiatic nations at the present time. Just as European democratic self-government reveals different types and forms, so also the types and forms of Asiatic democratic self-government as it goes on evolving itself, may show a great variety, so that the world may blossom into a garden

of many beautiful and fragrant flowers of self-goverument. The Indian movement for Swaraj is full of absorbing interest; and it is not too much to hope that it will receive the sympathy and the moral support of those, all over the world, who believe that without the universal diffusion of the blessings of freedom and self-government, the human race cannot attain unity and peace, and reach those heights of evolution to which it is God's design that it should rise.

I have faith in the political genius of England. One of the best traits of English character is that it seldom goes to extremes and allows a situation to drift to the breaking-point. The relations between England and India are at present passing through a crisis; but let us all hope that the new-born democracy of Great Britain will rise to the serious responsibility that rests on it.

The book gives a critical account of the Swaraj movement. Having myself played an humble part in the movement, I know its currents and under-currents fairly well and fully realize its inwardness. My object in writing it is to portray the Indian national struggle as clearly and fairly as possible, and to seek to enlist for it the sympathy of all the enlightened and progressive nations of the world.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Hon. Sir P. C. Sethna for the Foreword which he has been so kind as to contribute to the book.

NASIK,
1st January, 1930. R. G. PRADHAN.

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,,	9	,, 12,	read 'begun' for 'began'
,,	44	,, 8,	there should be a comma after "Governor-General"
,,	46	,, 14,	'and' should be omitted
.,	56	last line,,	read 'by' for 'with'
,,	59	line 15,	read 'love for' for 'love of'
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,,	272	line 22,	read 'no-confidenee' for 'non-confi-eence'
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After Chapter VI the chapters are wrongly numbered. Chapter VIII should be chapter VII and so on.

INDIA'S STRUGGLE FOR SWARAJ

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY

THE *regime* of Lord Ripon (1880-84 A.D.) as Governor-General and Viceroy of India will remain memorable in the annals of Modern India. It witnesssed the birth of that sentiment of nationality, which, soon after, found expression in the organisation of the Indian National Congress, and which has since become a potent factor in the evolution of India's destiny. The ground had been well prepared for the seed of this sentiment to sprout and grow. Ever since the establishment and consolidation of British rule over the greater part of the country, the very conditions of that rule had made for the evolution of nationality and unity among the Indian people. Not only its evils, but also its benefits, had contributed to bring it about. The first clear manifestation, however, of a national spirit, which proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that nationalism was born in India, took place in the early eighties of the nineteenth century, during the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, as a result of a proposed legislative measure which was small in itself, but which, as events proved, produced far

reaching consequences. The birth of the Indian national movement was the outcome of the forces and counterforces brought to a head by a legislative measure known as the Ilbert Bill.

The birth of the sense of a common nationality and of national unity, that embraced the whole subcontinent of India, and inspired its population, inhabiting distant provinces, speaking diverse tongues, professing different religions, and inheriting varied, and and in some cases,antagonistic traditions, was a phenomenon so unique in the long and chequered history of India, as to constitute an event of prodigious importance. It cannot, indeed, be said, that the people of India had been utterly innocent of the sentiment of nationality and of unity before the advent of the British. The sense of territorial unity, of the physical individuality of their mother-country, of their possessing a common motherland, endowed with all the marks of a distinct territorial unit, they had evolved from remote ages. Political unity, as expressed in a common indigenous Government that exercised sway over the whole of the country, they had twice all but completely attained, once, in the third century B. C. under Emperor Asoka, the great Budhist monarch of world-wide fame, and again, in the fourth century A. D., when Samudragupta, in the words of Vincent Smith "carried his victorious arms from the Ganges to the extremity of the peninsula." Cultural unity which gave them a common intellectual life, and bound them together with common social, moral and religious ideals, had been their great

distinguishing mark, centuries before that unity was broken through, by the onrush of a foreign element that not only deprived them of their political independence, but having established itself on the soil, sought to impose upon them its own religion and culture.

But, though the sentiment of nationality and of unity had always been more or less present, it was, in the nature of things, impossible, that, in the many centuries that preceded the establishment of British rule, it should have received such general expression, and attained such breadth and intensity, as mark it to-day. The material, moral and intellectual conditions which alone could have produced a general national movement extending over the whole country were then lacking. Those conditions were supplied by British rule, and the new forces that came in its train.

What were those new forces which British rule set in motion? The first and foremost was an increasingly organised and efficient system of Government based on the principle of the reign of law, and administered by men who combined in themselves some of the highest qualities of public service as well as of statesmanship. Both the system of administration and the *personnel* who worked it, could not but profoundly impress the mind of India. They represented a type of Government that was in great contrast with the comparatively inefficient methods of administration that obtained immediately before, and after, the break up of the Mughal Empire. And they gave to the awakened

mind of India a new conception of national efficiency. While this process of moral awakening was slowly going on, the introduction of railways, telegraphs, and unified postage, annihilated distance, brought the several provinces and peoples of India more closely together than before, and promoted among them a common understanding of the new conditions of life brought into existence by British rule. But the greatest force to the irresistible working of which India was subjected by British rule, was the introduction of Western education.

After a fierce battle that raged for several years between those who desired to promote the old Oriental learning, and those who, like Lord Macaulay, urged the opening of the rich treasures of European thought and culture to the Indian mind, the Government deliberately decided in favour of the latter. Their decision may have been partly influenced by considerations of administrative necessity. But though their motives in introducing Western education may not have been purely altruistic, the decision itself was such a great epoch-making event that it was bound to produce far-reaching effects upon the evolution of India's destiny. Modern India is, indubitably, the product of Western education. It has now-a-days become a fashion, in reactionary circles, to disparage Western education and to deny the immense good that it has done to this country. The prevailing system of Western education, no doubt, has its defects. But those who see little or no good in Western education, and consider it an unmixed

evil, doing irreparable harm to the country, are either *ignoramuses* or wilfully blind to the real facts as they are. It is impossible to conceive Modern India, such as she is and is becoming, without the powerful and beneficent influence of Western education.

The effects of Western education have been enormous and far-reaching. They have touched almost every sphere and phase of Indian thought and life. They have not, indeed, sensibly affected those basic moral and spiritual conceptions, which form the warp and woof of Indian thought; but even here, Western education has contributed to the removal of those excrescences which overlaid their eternal beauty and grandeur, and impaired their perennial vitality, and also in certain respects, added to their rich content, and modified the direction of their practical working in every-day life. But, in the region of social and political thought, the effects of Western education have been almost revolutionary.

For one thing, Western education has given India a common language in which her educated classes freely exchange their views and ideas. A common language may not be essential to national unity; but it cannot be denied that it is of great help towards its formation and growth. The process of development of the spirit of nationality would have been very slow and difficult but for the common English language, and the common intellectual culture supplied by Western education. It is true, that before the advent of the

British, the Hindus, all over the country, possessed a common culture, though not a common language. The same might be said of the Mahomedans also. But, owing to differences of race, language and religion, and antogonisms of tradition and history, the culture of the Hindus differed from that of the Mahomedans. It was only after the establishment of British rule and the introduction of Western education, when both these and other smaller Indian communities began to drink deep of the fountain of Western literature, Western history, and Western philosophy, that all the educated classes, irrespective of community, class or religion, became imbued with a common culture which itself gave rise, in the ripeness of time, to common views, feelings, aspirations, ideals. And common views, feelings, aspirations, ideals are of the essence of nationality. Those, who refuse to see any good in Western education or to consider it a progressive force, maintain that the latter half of the nineteenth century produced such tremendous world-forces, that even without such education, India would have developed the spirit of nationality and attained the status of a great modern Power. It is extremely difficult and absolutely futile to speculate on what would have happened, if the course of India's history had been different from what it has been. The fact remains that the evolution of Indian nationality has been greatly promoted by the spread of Western education.

But, it is not only indirectly, by means of a common language and common culture, that Western

education has awakened and fostered the spirit of nationality. Directly also, it has produced the same result. It is impossible to receive Western education without imbibing the spirit of nationality. If ancient Hindu culture is synonymous with religious and philosophical idealism, modern Western culture is synonymous with nationalism, the spirit of patriotism, the love of freedom. Nowhere do we find the spirit of nationality, the love of national independence and freedom, the sense of the worth of man as man, the right, the duty, and the joy of self-government, the duty of sacrificing all that one has, for the sake of national honour and greatness, having had such full play as in the annals of the West; nowhere do we find them glorified so much as in the literatures of Western countries, in their speculative treatises no less than in their poetry, their history, their general literature. That every nation has a right to be independent and free, that no nation can be truly free and great which does not consider it its right and duty to govern itself, that personal liberty is the basis of personal character and individual responsibility, that no national effort and sacrifice can be too great in the interests of the mother-land:—these are among the great fundamental principles of Western culture; and they are writ so large in Western literature and history that their vital importance to nation-building and national growth began to be soon, and more and more, realized by those young and plastic Indian minds that were trained in increasing numbers in the univer-

sities. Education, whatever may be its character and label, will be an utterly useless and wasteful process, if it did not succeed in impressing upon the mind its peculiar ideas and principles. The mind is what education makes it, and the Indian would have been a curious human being, if he had failed to learn and assimilate the distinctive noble teachings of Western education. In these days, Indian nationalism has become suspicious of things Western, but time was when even the most advanced nationalists frankly recognised the debt which India owed to Western education. Mr. Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, who, along with Mr. Tilak and Mr. Agarkar, founded the famous Deccan Education Society of Poona, and was one of the few staunchest nationalists of his time, used to compare Western education to the milk of the tigress. He thereby paid homage to the virility of that education, meaning to convey that no one who was Western-educated, could fail to imbibe the priceless virtues of love of independence and freedom, of patriotism, of the spirit of progress and of ceaseless struggle to achieve it. In the Deccan, the first most powerful organ of nationalism has been the *Kesari*, whose remarkable achievements in the field of Indian journalism and whose great contribution to the political awakening of the Marathi-speaking population are now a matter of history. In an article published in 1885, before the establishment of the Indian National Congress, it wrote:—

We are, at present, gradually being inspired by the spirit of patriotism. The birth of patriotism among us is

due to British rule and English education. English education has imparted to us knowledge of ancient and modern history; it has enabled us to know what were the fruits of patriotism among the ancient Greeks and Romans. We have also learned from their histories how, when they lost their patriotism, they were subjected to foreign domination and became ignorant and superstitious. English rule has made us realise the necessity of cultivating patriotism in our national concerns············The spirit of patriotism has not as yet permeated all classes. It is only those who have come under the influence of English education and began to realise the defects of British administration that have been inspired by that spirit. Patriotism is not our national quality: it is the product of the influences to which we have been subjected after the introduction of British rule. If patriotism had been a part and parcel of our national character, it would have been found among those who are not Western-educated as well as among those who are. It was a natural quality of the ancient Greeks and Romans; and therefore, in face of foreign aggression, they could sink all their internal differences and present a united front. It was a cardinal article of their faith that there could be no greater title to immortal glory than to sacrifice one's life for the fatherland, and no greater disgrace and humiliation than to bend the knee before the foreign conqueror or to serve him. Our history tells a different tale altogether. Those things which could not thrive on the Greek and the Roman soil on account of the virtue of patriotism innate among the ancient Greeks and Romans ran riot among us, owing to our lack of that virtue. Our present patriotism is thus as yet an exotic; it has naturally not spread among all classes and commuities, from the highest to the lowest, from the rich to the poor. Its general diffusion depends, first, upon the spread of English education and, secondly, upon a clear realization of the evils of British rule. English education will have done us great good, even though its only benefit will be to sow the seeds of patriotism on the Indian soil.

Thus, the greatest effect of Western education has been to promote aud foster the spirit of patriotism and the sense of nationality.

Another great effect ot Westen education in the region of political thought deserves to be mentioned. It has not only awakened and developed the spirit of patriotism and nationality, but has radically changed some of the fundamental political conceptions of the Indian people. Here, its action has been almost revolutionary. For centuries past, the Indian mind has been trained in, and accustomed to, the principles and methods of absolute rule, though tempered by high considerations of duty and righteousness. If the king was an autocratic ruler, he was, at the same time, expected to be a good and paternal ruler. But the fact remains that the polity which prevailed in India from remote ages was monarchical; conceptions of constitutional government, of the sovereignty of the people, of self-government, had not dawned upon the people. The rise and growth of these conceptions is due to Western education. Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to other effects of Western education, there can be no doubt whatever, that it has greatly changed the political notions and sentiments of the Indian people. There has been a vast and continuous development of Indian thought in the regions of ethics and philosophy; the achievements of the Indian mind in those regions are even now hardly equalled, much less surpassed by the most recent developments of corresponding European

thought. But it must be frankly admitted, that the development of our political thought was arrested many centuries before the establishment of British rule. The *Sukraniti*, the *Arthashastra* of Chanakya, and other treatises on ancient Indian polity which have of late received great attention from scholars, reveal, no doubt, considerable activity of the Indian mind in the science and the art of Government. They contain much political wisdom, and many noble maxims of policy. They also warrant the inference that if the evolution of India had taken place on lines different from those on which it has actually proceeded, and if the Indian people had applied themselves to politics with the same devotion and intensity as they had done to ethics, religion and metaphysics, the development of Indian political thought would not have been arrested, but would have kept pace *pari passu* with the great achievements of the Indian mind in other spheres of speculation. The fact, however, is that in its evolutionary process, the Indian mind was so much dominated by those experiences which predispose men to religious and metaphysical speculation, that, in course of time, it ceased to pay much attention to politics. The result was that the political thought of India lagged far behind the stage of development which it had reached in the West. The harmony that ought to exist among the different spheres of thought and life was broken. Politics ceased to be a national interest, and became the concern of a few individuals. A gradual but steady deterioration of the political spirit ensued.

not only among the masses, but also among the classes. It may be said without exaggeration, that the political spirit of the people of India had never been at such a low ebb as at the establishment of British rule. Now, Western education has resulted in reviving and developing that spirit. It has made the people realise its great value as an absolutely essential, and highly important, element in a complete and harmonious national life. And, above all, it has revolutionized the political thoughts, notions and sentiments which they had inherited from the past. The conception of the sovereignty of the king has given place to the conception of the sovereignty of the people ; the notion of the divinity of kingship has been relegated to the limbo of exploded myths. Self-government is regarded as the basis and spring of all national health, strength and power, and personal or autocratic rule, considered a great source of evil, and a serious barrier to progress. The principle of the reign of law is now enshrined in the hearts of the people ; the old notion of the arbitrary *fiat or mandate* of the ruler excites nothing but horror. We may or may not have learned other lessons from the West ; there is no doubt whatever that we have learned and assimilated the sovereign political conceptions of modern Western civilisation.

Another effect of Western education, which might, in fact, be considered the most radical and far-reaching of all, was the spirit of national and racial self-introspection which it aroused among the people. We began

earnestly to enquire into the root causes of our fall, of our loss of national independence, of our comparatively backward and unprogressive condition. Time was when India was the most prosperous and powerful country in the world. That such a country should fall a prey to foreign invaders, and sink into a state of decadence and degeneracy, could not but arouse our spirit of self-inquiry; and Western education with the knowledge it brought to us of the principles and conditions of social and political progress and of Western social and political institutions, made us realize that our fall must largely be attributed to the evils that had crept in in our social and religious life and institutions. The movements for social and religious reform that arose soon after the introduction of Western education were the outcome of this spirit of self-introspection. They aimed at promoting national unity by the abolition of caste, and at purifying our social and religious life in general. The great founders and apostles of those movements saw that the superiority of Western civilization and the secret of its marvellous success lay in the freedom of thought, of speech, and of action which produced and encouraged initiative, promoted the discovery of truth, and fostered the spirit of enterprise that was undaunted by difficulties. We felt that unless we cultivated and developed the same triple freedom, India could not rise again and become a great nation.

In course of time, the new forces generated by British rule and Western education made us realize al-

so the evil effects of that rule. Those effects could have been avoided by timely reform and re-adjustment of the governmental system and the machinery of administration. But all the political reforms hitherto introduced have been marred by two defects, first, their belatedess and, secondly, their inadequacy, They, therefore, failed to prevent or remove those effects. British rule had proved a beneficent force, but its momentum soon exhausted itself. It would seem as if British statesmanship stood aghast at the consequences of its own progressive policy, and feared that a further career of continued and consistent beneficence would produce results that might endanger the British connection itself. The extreme costliness of the administration utterly out of proportion to the means of the people, the growing poverty of the people which made them an easy prey to famine and disease, the racial and imperial *hauteur*, which was indeed unknown to the founders of British rule and those early statesmen and administrators who consolidated and strengthened it, but which came to be displayed in an increasing measure by later generations of Anglo-Indian officials, the utter disregard of Indian views. sentiments and aspirations shown by the Government, the growing burden of taxation, the comparative neglect of nation-building functions, and, in particular, of primary and technical education, the jealous exclusion of the people from higher appointments, the general subordination of Indian interests to those of the ruling race, all these and other evils of British rule

began to be realized with a growing sense of wrong and injustice. The British system of government and administration failed to keep pace with the awakening of the people and their rising aspirations. They longed for playing a worthy role in their own country, but that role was denied to them, owing to the inherent limitations and the supposed exigencies of an imperial foreign rule. Their capacities sought expansion and satisfaction, but they found themselves cribbed, cabined and confined all round. They felt that British rule was good, but not so good as it ought to be. and might be; and above all, they felt that foreign rule, however efficient, beneficent and well-intentioned, had its inevitable limitations.

Such was the state of the Indian mind when the Government of Lord Ripon introduced, in the Imperial Legislative Council, a measure called the Ilbert Bill. Lord Ripon was a sincere Liberal, and had been sent to India by Gladstone who had come into power in 1880. The regime of his predecesssor, Lord Lytton, had proved an utter failure; it had resulted in throwing India down to the verge of bankruptcy, gagging the Vernacular Press, stifling India's aspirations, and producing grave discontent among the people. Lord Ripon had been specially appointed with the object of allaying the discontent and removing the evil effects produced by the policy of Lord Lytton. He sincerely desired to conscientiously perform the high and difficult task entrusted to him. The censorship of the Vernacular Press was removed: local self-government was

encouraged; a general spirit of sympathy and liberalism was infused into the whole administration. The Ilbert Bill which aimed at removing the bar, whereby Indian magistrates could not try European offenders, was in itself such a small measure, that Lord Ripon could never have dreamt that it would be received with any other feeling than that of cordial approval by all the races and communities in India. But the fact was that his sympathetic and liberal policy had produced a strong under-current of hostility among European circles; and they started against the Bill an agitation of such unparalleled fury and virulence that the Government yielded to their clamour and threats, and thought it expedient to amend the Bill so as to make it acceptable to the European community. The interests of the Indian people were betrayed; the principles of justice, of righteousness, of liberalism, of racial equality thrown to the wind. The Indian people carried on a counter-agitation, but to no purpose; the prestige of the ruling race was vindicated, and right proved impotent before might.

The lesson of the agitation against the Ilbert Bill was not, however, lost on the Indian people. They realised the evils of foreign rule all the more keenly, and there was a general, strong feeling among the *intelligentsia* in every province, that a national movement must be organized with the object of obtaining redress of grievances and raising the political status of India. The European agitation against the Ilbert Bill taught them the value of united and organized agitation; and

they began to feel that the time was ripe for organising a national political movement. The forces set in motion by British rule had produced their inevitable results; and the national consciousness, aroused, as never before, by the European agitation against the Ilbert Bill, sought expression in an organised national movement. That was the beginning of the struggle for *Swaraj*.

CHAPTER II.

THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the first powerful impetus to the organisation of the Indian National movement was given by a high Anglo-Indian official, Mr. A. O. Hume. Mr. Hume held high office as Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, and during his tenure of office, was so deeply impressed by the economic sufferings of the masses and the grave discontent among the educated classes, that after his retirement in 1882, he devoted himself to the formation of an organisation that would afford a legitimate vent to the seething discontent then rife among the people, and direct it along constitutional channels. He had the wisdom to realize that the *intelligentsia* of a country, however small in number, were, after all, the natural leaders of the people, and that, to attempt to put down their aspirations, instead of wisely guiding, and in an increasing measure, satisfying them, could not but result in grave political danger. He, therefore, took the bold step of placing himself at the head of India's nascent political movement, and though a foreigner and retired bureaucrat, won the confidence and esteem of the Indian people, and became a trusted and powerful exponent of their awakened national self-consciousness. In March 1883, he addressed a circular

letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University, earnestly appealing to them to form an organisation having for its object the promotion of the mental, moral, social and political progress of India. He exhorted them to make a beginning with a small body of only fifty founders to be the mustard seed of future growth. "If," said he "only fifty men, good and true, can be found to join as founders, the thing can be established, and the further development will be comparatively easy". And he concluded with the following stirring appeal:—"You are the salt of the land. And if, amongst you, the *elite*, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient powers of self-sacrifice, sufficient genuine and unselfish, heart-felt, patriotism to take the initiative, and, if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the cause, then there is no hope for India. Her sons must and will remain mere humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers, for 'they would be free, themselves must strike the blow.' And if even the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures, or selfishly wedded to personal concerns, that they dare not or will not strike a blow for their country's sake, then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on; for they deserve nothing better. Every nation secures precisely as good a Government as it merits."

This appeal was made at a psychological moment, and an association called 'the Indian National Union' was formed with Mr. Hume as General Secretary. The policy of the Union was thus defined:—

"The Union is prepared, when necessary, to oppose, by all constitutional methods, all authorities, high or low, here or in England, whose acts or omissions are opposed to those principles of the Government of India laid down for them by the British Parliament and endorsed by the British Sovereign, but it holds the continued affiliation of India to Great Britain, at any rate for a period far exceeding the range of any practical political forecast, to be absolutely essential to the interests of our own national development.

It was decided to hold a conference of the Union at Poona during the Christmas of 1885. The following extracts from the circular, convening the conference, issued by Mr. Hume and Mr. Surendranath Bannerjee, are of considerable interest:—

"The direct object of the conference will be: (1) to enable all the earnest labourers in the cause of the nation to become personally known to each other; (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

"Indirectly, this conference will form the germ of a native Parliament, and, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions."

An outbreak of cholera at Poona necessitated a change of venue, and the conference was held at Bombay on 27th December 1885. The attendance was small, only seventy-two delegates having been present. But they were among the *elite* of India, and the deficiency of numbers was more than made up by enthusiasm, that ran high throughout the country, due to the

dawn of a new hope and to the consciousness that a movement big with possibilities was being launched into existence. The question of the appropriate name that should be given to the Union was carefully considered, and it was resolved that it should be called "the Indian National Congress". Thus, with the formation of the Indian National Congress on the 27th December 1885, a new era was inaugurated in the history of India, for it was under the auspices of that body and on that memorable date, that India formally entered on a struggle which, though small in its beginning, grew keener aud keener every year, until, in the ripeness of time, it developed into a great movement for the attainment of *Swaraj*, or full responsible Government within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

From the historical point of view, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the address delivered by Mr. W. C. Bannerjee as President of the first session of the Indian National Congress, or of the resolutions that were passed in that session. Mr. Bannerjee claimed for the Congress a truly representative character. He admitted that, judged by the standard of the House of Commons, the delegates to the Congress were not representatives of the people, in the sense in which the members of the House were representatives of the constituencies; but, he rightly observed, that if community of sentiments, community of feelings and community of wants entitled any one to speak on behalf of others, then,

assuredly, they might justly claim to be the representatives of the people of India. He defined the aims and objects of the Congress as follows:

(1) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the various parts of the Empire.

(2) The eradication, by direct personal friendly intercourse, of all the possible race, creed or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's memorable reign.

(3) The authoritative record, after they had been elicited by the fullest discussion of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.

(4) The determination of the lines upon, and the methods by, which, during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interest.

The Congress adopted seven resolutions, exclusive of those which were more or less of a formal nature. The military expenditure loomed large then as now, and the Congress condemned it as extravagant. The India Council was considered the greatest obstacle to Indian political reform, and the Congress demanded its abolition as "the necessary preliminary to all other reforms". The desire for a larger share in the administration of the country found expression in a resolution which urged that the competitive Civil Service Examination should be held simultaneously both in England and India. The most important and significant resolution was, however, that regarding

the reform and expansion of the Legislative Councils. It demanded that the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils should be expanded and reformed by the introduction of the elective element, that Legislative Councils created for the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab, and that the members of the Councils should be empowered to interpellate the Executive Government in regard to all branches of the administration and to discuss the Budget, though not to vote on it. It further urged that a standing committee should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protests that might be recorded by the majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the executive of the power which would be vested in it of overruling the decision of such majorities.

The expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils was thus the most important demand put forward by the Congress ; in fact, it formed the principal plank in its programme for many years. In 1880, five years before the establishment of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji had formulated the same demand in a memorandum submitted to the Secretary of State for India. He had condemned the system of nomination that prevailed at the time as a great farce, and suggested in some detail how the larger towns, at all events, could be given the right of electing representatives to the Legislative Councils. And, in the light of subsequent events, it deserves to be noted that he had even suggested a mode of direct election. The desire for some mea-

sure, however small, of genuine popular representation in the Legislative Councils had become so general and strong that public opinion had come to look upon it as the root of all progress. Mr. W. S. Blunt, in his INDIA UNDER RIPON records a reminiscence which clearly illustrates this state of the public mind. During his stay at Calcutta in 1883-4, he attended a series of Indian meetings at every one of which the view was expressed that no improvement of any sort in the condition of the Indian people was possible, so long as the constitution of the Government of India remained what it was. The general complaint was that the Government was too conservative, too selfish, too alien to the thoughts and needs of India, to effect anything, as thus constituted; and the position was strongly maintained that, just as in England, reformers at the beginning of the 19th century looked first to a reform of Parliament, so, Indian reformers must first look to a reform of the governing body of the country. Thus, public opinion had already been crystallized on the reform of the constitution, such as it was; and it was quite natural, therefore, that the most important demand made by the Congress was the application of the principle of election to the Legislative Councils and the widening of their powers.

Looking back on the early proceedings of the Congress, we are impressed by the extreme moderation of its demands. The organisers and promoters of the Congress were not idealists who had built their habitations away on the horizon; they were practical

reformers imbued with the spirit, principles and methods of mid-Victorian liberalism and bent on winning freedom by gradual steps, broadening from precedent to precedent. They, therefore, took scrupulous care not to pitch their demands too high. Some of them may have cherished in their heart of hearts full-fledged parliamentary self-government as a far-off ideal; but all of them wanted to work on lines of the least resistance, and therefore framed their proposals of reform on such moderate and cautious lines as not to arouse any serious opposition. And, indeed, for the first three years, so long as the activities of the Congress were confined merely to passing resolutions, the attitude of the Government was one of friendly sympathy or, at all events, of kindly neutrality. It is said that the idea of the Congress itself had been suggested to Mr. Hume by Lord Dufferin, the then Governor-General of India, and so sincere was his sympathy supposed to be with the movement, that he was consulted as to whether Lord Reay, the then Governor of Bombay, should not be requested to preside over the first session. Considerations of political expediency are said to have prevented him from approving of the proposal. At the second Congress held at Calcutta, he invited the delegates to a garden party at the Government House, and the same consideration was shown to them by the Governor of Madras next year.

But this attitude of Government was short-lived. Finding that the expressions of sympathy in which the

Government indulged were no better than mere platonic sentiments, evincing no real desire to grant the demands of the Congress, Mr. Hume resolved to carry on a vigorous campaign of agitation among the masses, on the model of the Anti-Corn-Law League. Hundreds of public meetings were held, many in country Districts; pamphlets and leaflets were sown broadcast among the people with the object of enlightening them as to their rights as citizens, and as to the demands made by the Congress, and of arousing in them a strong determination to carry on agitation until those demands were conceded. Mr. Hume, in fact, resorted to the only effective method of constitutional action, viz., the stirring of the masses, a thing which was unknown since the days of the Mutiny, and which the Government had never thought of with equanimity. The vigorous propaganda, which was thus carried on among the masses, produced such effect upon the Government that they felt themselves compelled to reveal their true attitude with regard to the Congress. The attitude of friendly neutrality gave place to suspicion, intolerance, and open hostility. At the annual St. Andrew's dinner held at Calcutta in November 1887, Lord Dufferin made an attack upon the Congress, which was as disingenuous as it was clever. Knowing, as he did, that the demands of the Congress could not be assailed on the ground of reason, he ridiculed the movement itself as representing only "a microscopic minority of the people" and condescended to the unworthy tactics of misrepresenting its aims.

"Some intelligent, loyal, patriotic and well-meaning men," he said "are desirous of taking, I will not say, a further step in advance, but a big jump into the unknown, by the application to India of democratic methods of Government, and the adoption of a parliamentary system which England herself had reached by slow degrees, and through the discipline of many centuries. The ideal authoritatively suggested is the creation of a representative body or bodies in which the official element should be in a minority, which shall have what is called the power of the purse, and which, through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British Executive into subjection to their will". Misrepresentation was not the only weapon employed to put down the rising movement of the National Congress. The old Machiavellian policy of *Divide et Impera* was also adopted, and the Mahomedans, who had, as a community, remained aloof from the Congress, were egged on to form an anti-Congress organisation and to oppose the Congress and its demands with overt hostility.

It is difficult, after such a long period of time, to divine the real motives of Lord Dufferin in so grossly misrepresenting the aims of the Congress. He was a statesman of such high ability that it is impossible to believe that he really failed to comprehend the programme of the Congress; he must have realised in his heart of hearts that the demands of the Congress were as moderate and reasonable as they were inevitable. That he was not absolutely opposed to them is clearly

shown by the fact that while, on the one hand, he made a vigorous, though entirely undeserved, attack on the Congress, on the other hand, in the same year, he sent to the Home Government a despatch containing his own proposals of reform which were not far different from those urged by the Congress. The true explanation of this apparently double policy seems to be that, trained as he was in the arts of diplomacy, he was anxious to avoid any impression that he was yielding to the clamour of popular agitation, while advocating his own proposals of reform. Whatever it might be, the official attitude towards the National Congress became one of scarcely disguised hostility after the popular awakening caused by the untiring and vigorous propaganda so ably and unselfishly carried on by "the Father of the Congress," as Mr. Hume came to be lovingly called by his Indian friends and admirers.

It was in an atmosphere of official misunderstanding, suspicion and opposition that the Congress met at Allahabad in 1888. But the spirit of the leaders of the Congress was undaunted, and far from abandoning the demand of the expansion and reform of the councils, they reiterated it with greater emphasis than before. The resolution on the subject was moved by Mr. Telang, a rising politician of great ability who combined in himself the rare qualities of sweetness and light, in a speech which was as remarkable for persuasive eloquence as for close reasoning. The manner and pirit in which he answered the charges brought against

the Congress by Lord Dufferin was almost classic. He said :—

"The various charges which His Lordship makes against the Congress are charges which remind me of a certain definition which was once given of a crab, viz., that a crab is a red fish which walks backwards; and the criticism made upon that was that the definition was perfectly correct, except that the crab was not a fish, that it was not red, and that it did not walk backwards. Now I may say that Lord Dufferin's criticism is perfectly correct; except that we have not asked for democratic methods of Government; we have not asked for Parliamentary institutions which England has got after many centuries of discipline; we have not asked for the power of the purse; and we have not asked that the British Executive should be brought under subjection to us".

The demand for the liberalisation of the constitution, such as it was at the time, was reiterated from year to year with increasing insistence. At the fifth session of the Congress held at Bombay in 1889, a skeleton scheme was drafted, and Mr. Charles Bradlaugh M. P., who had come from England specially to attend the Congress, was requested to introduce in Parliament a Bill on the lines of the scheme.

In order to enlist the support of British public opinion for the Bill, the Congress resolved to carry on vigorous propaganda in England itself. Not only was a committee formed there to educate the British electorate and to win the support of at least the more progressive members of Parliament for the cause of Indian constitutional reform, but a strong deputation of the Congress visited England in 1889 for the pur-

pose of pressing upon the consideration of the British public the political reforms which it advocated. A journal called INDIA was also started in London in 1890, to place before the British public the Indian view of Indian affairs. The journal was edited with great ability and played a considerable part in advancing the cause of Indian politcal reform among members of Parliament.

Every Government is human, and though it may make a show of opposing a movement of reform, and, if possible, of putting it down, it does not fail to be more or less influenced by it in the long run. The strenuous agitation of the Congress compelled the attention of the Government to the necessity of meeting, at least partially, the demands of the people of India as voiced by their leaders, and of introducing some measure of constitutional reform. Lord Dufferin, in spite of the attitude he outwardly maintained towards the Congress, had the wisdom to realize that the altered conditions of India demanded the reform of the central and the provincial legislatures ; and he appointed a committee to thoroughly investigate and report on the question of constitutional reforms. He also sent, as we have already said, a despatch to the Home Government urging reform, and outlining and explaining the particular measures of reform which he recommended. The question was still under discussion when his term of office was over, but it was taken up by his successor Lord Lansdowne. He consulted the local Governments, who all expressed themselves in

favour of the view that the councils should be enlarged and endowed with increased powers.

While the Government were thus maturing their own proposals of reform, Mr. Bradlaugh, true to the promise he had given to the Congress, introduced in Parliament in the session of 1890, his own bill which was based to a considerable extent on the scheme prepared by the Congress. But his premature death soon after in 1891 terminated all prospects of a more liberal measure being carried in Parliament. The introduction of Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill, however, forced the hands of the Government, and they introduced a Bill of their own which received the royal assent in June 1892. Thus, the struggle for political reform begun in 1885 and, strenuously carried on for several years by the Congress, bore its first fruits in the expansion of the Legislative Councils and increase in their powers under the Indian Councils Act of 1892. Though the Act was not a liberal measure in itself and did not satisfy even the moderate expectations of the people at the time, it clearly illustrated the power and efficacy of a great national movement and vigorous popular agitation.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION TILL THE PASSING OF THE INDIAN COUNCILS ACT, 1892.

Having traced, in the preceding Chapter, the history of the Indian constitutional movement till the enactment of the Indian Councils Act of 1892, we shall, at this stage, briefly review the development of the Indian constitution from its early beginnings to the expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils brought about by that Act.

A careful bird's eye-view of the changes that have been introduced, from time to time, in the system of Government in India under British rule, reveals two main features, one of which has, happily, long since ceased to exist. First, the system has been modified and improved, not in accordance with abstract theories of Government, not, indeed, until recently, even in accordance with any definite, considered goal of British policy, but solely, in the light of practical experience, mainly with a view to meeting new conditions and circumstances. The Indian constitution, no less than the British, illustrates the British method of making no radical or revolutionary changes, but of moving slowly and cautiously, and making only such advance as may be deemed necessary in order either to improve the

existing machinery of Government, or to prevent popular discontent from becoming too serious. In the case of India, moreover, the extremely slow pace of progress is further determined by the paramount consideration of maintaining British supremacy, and not exposing it to any risk whatever. The second feature is that, for a long period, the legislative and executive functions of Government were not separated, but concentrated in one and the same body. The Governor-General and his Council were responsible both for administration and legislation; they not only administered the affairs of the country but also made laws. It was only in 1833 that these functions were separated; but even then the division was made in a very rudimentary manner; a fourth member was appointed who formed part of the Council only for the purposes of legislation, and not for those of the Executive Government. Under the Regulating Act of 1773, indeed, the rules, regulations and ordinances made by the Governor-General-in-Council were not valid until duly registered and published in the Supreme Court with its assent and approbation. But this provision for the assent of a judicial body was soon found to be unworkable; it led to violent conflicts between the Government and the Court; and ultimately in 1781, Parliament passed an amending Act which repealed it. The three principal functions of Government are legislation, executive government and administration of justice; and in any sound and normal system of government, they are discharged by different bodies. But until 1833,

the system of Government in British India was marked by the feature that the legislative and executive functions were not separated; the body that formed the executive Government formed also the legislature. The establishment of a legislature, though of a shadowy nature, dates from the Charter Act of 1833 which provided for the appointment to the Governor-General's Council of a Law Member for legislative purposes.

The Charter Act of 1833 is an important landmark in the constitutional development of India under British rule. It not only established a rudimentary legislature which has now developed into the Legislative Assembly, but also brought about the centralisation of Government by vesting the legislative power throughout India in the Governor-General-in-Council. Hitherto, the Presidencies ot Madras and Bombay enjoyed full, independent powers of legislation, over which the Governor-General-in-Council exercised no control. Indeed, the control of the Governor-General-in-Council over those Presidencies was limited only to transactions relating to peace or war, and relations with independent Indian Powers. But under the Charter Act of 1833, the legislative power was taken away from them: the Government of India became the sole legislative authority; and all that the Presidency Governments could do was to submit proposals for legislation for the consideration of the Governor-General-in-Council. This legislative centralization was, of course, accompanied by finanical centraliza-

tion; and it was not until 1861 that the legislative functions were restored to provincial Governments.

The question of introducing representative institutions in India had not altogether escaped the attention of Parliament when the Councils Act of 1833 was passed. The Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to consider the renewal of the Company's Charter gave some thought to it, and Mr. James Mill, who was examined as a witness, was specifically asked whether he considered representative Government practicable in India. His answer was that it was utterly out of the question. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the great Hindu social and religious reformer, who was in England at the time, submitted to the Select Committee, a series of memoranda on various aspects of the Indian problem; but he did not deal with the question of representative Government at all. It would seem, the desire for representative Government had not been felt at the time even by the best minds in India. Nevertheless, the fact that Mr. James Mill was examined on the point shows that the idea had occurred to at least some members of the Select Committee. In England, the Reform Bill had just been passed; and, besides, there was a good deal of philosophic discussion of the merits of representative Government. Naturally, therefore, the question of introducing representative Government in India received the attention of some members of the Committee. But the time was not ripe for it, and it does not seem to have been seriously pursued.

But though the Charter Act of 1833 made no improvement whatever in the Indian polity in the direction of repesentative Government, it established the principle of equality between Europeans and Indians in the matter of appointments in the public services. It declared that no native of India nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, " shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place or office or employment under the Company ".

The Court of Directors, in their Despatch to the Government of India, explaining the several provisions of the Act, observed :—

> "The meaning of the enactment we take to be that there shall be no governing caste in British India, that whatever other tests of qualification may be adopted, distinctions of race or religion shall not be of the number, that no subject of the King, whether of Indian, or British or of mixed descent, shall be excluded, either from the posts usually conferred on our uncovenanted servants in India or from the covenanted service itself, provided he be otherwise eligible under the rules, and agreeably to the conditions observed and enacted in the one case as in the other…… ……………Fitness is, henceforth, to be the criterion of eligibility ".

The new system soon disclosed its own defects. The provincial Governments never reconciled themselves to a system which deprived them of their legislative functions, and made them mere appendages to a central Government which could possess no adequate knowledge of local circumstances and requirements. The Indian Government, too,

began to realize from actual experience that the task of legislating for the several provinces of India was beset with such difficulty that it was impossible for one single Government to cope with it.

When the question of the renewal of the Company's Charter was again considered in 1852, this effect of the Charter Act of 1833 was pointed out by several witnesses. For instance, Mr. McLeod, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service who held the Office of a Law Commissioner, said:—

"The Governor-General with four members of Council, however highly qualified those individuals may be, is not altogether a competent legislature for the great empire which we have in India. It seems to me very desirable that in the legislative Government of India, there should be one or more persons having local knowledge and experience from the minor presidencies, that is entirely wanting in the legislative department as at present constituted. It appears to me that this is one considerable and manifest defect. The Governor-General and Council have not sufficient leisure and previous knowledge to conduct, in addition to their executive and administrative functions, the whole duties of legislation for the Indian Empire. It seems to me that it would be advisable to enlarge the Legislative Council and have representatives of the minor presidencies in it without enlarging the Executive Council or in any way altering its present constitution".

In accordance with this consensus of opinion, the Charter Act of 1853 differentiated the legislative machine more decisively from the Executive, by constituting a distinct legislative Council consisting of the Governor-General, the members of the Executive Council and six new members, two of them being

English Judges of the Calcutta Supreme Court, and the other four, officials, each appointed by the provincial Governments of Bengal, Madras, Bombay and Agra respectively. At the same time, the number of members of the Governor-General's Executive Council was increased to four by the inclusion of the Law Member. Thus, the Legislative Council consisted of ten members exclusive of the Governor-General. The constitution of the Council was, however, entirely official : there was no idea yet of introducing the non-official element, European or Indian ; indeed, so far as the Indian non-official element was concerned, it was considered inexpedient to place Indians in the Council.

Though the Legislative Council established by the Charter Act of 1853 was small in number and purely official, it must be regarded as the first real Legislative Council of India. Henceforth, its business was conducted on the lines on which Legislative business is conducted. Discussions were oral, instead of in writing ; bills were referred to select committees instead of being examined by a single member; and the proceedings were conducted in public and published in official reports.

This petty official Council soon proved a source of embarrassment to the Government. The relations between it and the Government were, by no means, cordial. It showed an independence of spirit which the Government did not like. It refused to carry out the orders of the Home Government to legislate regarding the office of the Administrator-General; it

presented an address demanding the communication to it of certain correspondence between the Home Government and the Government of India; above all, it assumed the Parliamentary function of inquiring into grievances and seeking their redress. The complaint against it was that it became a sort of a debating society or petty Parliament, that its methods of work tended to delay and obstruct the transaction of business. The part it played is shown by the criticisms of Sir Lawrence Peel, who said: "It has no jurisdiction in the nature of that of a grand inquest of the nation. Its functions are purely legislative and are limited even in that respect. It is not an Anglo-Indian House of Commons for the redress of grievances, to refuse supplies and so forth".

But before these defects were fully disclosed, the Mutiny of 1857 had broken out, and for a while, the fate of British rule itself in India hung in the balance. The experiences of the Mutiny had a profound effect upon the public mind of England. In 1858, a bill was passed whereby the Government of India was transferred to the Crown. This necessarily involved re-constitution of the Home Government. The affairs of India were henceforth administered by a Secretary of State and a Council called the India Council. On 1st November 1858, Her Majesty Queen Victoria issued a Proclamation to the Princes, Chiefs and the people of India, whereby the transfer of the Government of India to the Crown was publicly announced, and in which the promise of equal treatment in the matter of appoint-

ments, given by the Charter Act of 1853, was reaffirmed, and further promises of entertaining the same responsibilities towards the Indian people as towards other subjects of the Empire and of carrying on the Government for their benefit were made. The Proclamation has lost its importance in the light of subsequent pronouncements and developments of British policy, but for many years, it was regarded as the Charter of Indian rights and liberties. India always rested her claim for just and equal treatment on the noble principles laid down in the Proclamation, and an attempt made by Lord Curzon during his Viceroyalty, to explain away its binding character by calling it 'an impossible charter', evoked a storm of indignation throughout the length and breadth of India.

Hitherto, the Indian element had been deliberately excluded from the councils of the Government of India; we have seen that when the Legislative Council was enlarged in 1855, the general feeling among the British was that the admission of Indians to the Legislature would be inexpedient. Just as, until the Morley-Minto reforms, the admission of Indians to the Executive Council was viewed with disfavour, as likely to lead to untoward political consequences, so, until the angle of vision was changed by the revelations of the Mutiny, the belief had been current that it would be unwise to appoint Indians to the Legislative Council. The change in the attitude of responsible statesmen and administrators towards this important question is well expressed by Sir Bartle Frere in a minute written in 1860 :—

"The addition of the native element, has, I think, become necessary owing to our diminished opportunities of learning through indirect channels what the natives think of our measures, and how the native community will be affected by them. It is useless to speculate on the many causes which have conspired to deprive us of the advantage which our predecessors enjoyed in this respect. Of the fact, there can be no doubt, and no one will, I think, object to the only obvious means of regaining in part the advantages which we have lost, unless he is prepared for the perilous experiment of continuing to legislate for millions of people with few means of knowing, except by a rebellion, whether the laws suit them or not.

"The Durbar of a native Prince is nothing more than a council very similar to that which I have described. To it, under a good ruler, all have access, very considerable license of speech is permitted, and it is in fact the channel from which the ruler learns how his measures are likely to affect his subjects, and may hear of discontent before it becomes disaffection.

"I cannot think that the plan proposed will, even in our presidency towns, lead, as has been apprehended, to needless talking and debate, or convert our Councils into parish vestries. It is a great evil of the present system that Government can scarcely learn how its measures will be received or how they are likely to affect even its European subjects till criticism takes the form of settled and often bitter opposition".

The Mutiny with its extremely painful experiences was a great eye-opener, and responsible statesmen and administrators both in England and India carefully considered the question of the changes that should be introduced in the system of Government in India. There were three schools of thought on the subject. One, which might be called "the Eastern School", held the view that the Government of India should be

carried on, not on Western, but on traditional indigenous lines, and proposed that the old system under which the executive constituted also the legislature should be restored, with this difference, however, that the Government should, from time to time, convene an advisory Council, somewhat in the nature of a Durbar, which the Government should consult, whenever any legislation was to be undertaken, but whose advice they were not bound to follow. The second school, which might be described as 'the Western School', advocated the introduction of representative institutions. The third school favoured the introduction of representative institutions but wanted them to be confined to Europeans only, since, in their opinion, Indians had no experience of, or training in, them. Sir Charles Wood, who introduced in the House of Commons the Legislative measure which became the Indian Councils Act of 1861, thus referred to these different views that prevailed at the time:—

"The notion of legislation which is entertained by a native is that of a chief or Sovereign who makes what laws he pleases. He has little or no idea of any distinction between the executive and legislative functions of Government. A native chief will assemble his nobles around him in the Darbar, where they freely and frankly express their opinions: but having informed himself by their communications, he determines by his own will what shall be done. Among the various proposals which have been made for the Government of India is one that the power of legislation should rest entirely with the executive, but that there should be a consultative body; that is, that the Governor-General should assemble from time to time a considerable number whose opinions he

should hear, but by whose opinions he should not be bound; and that he should himself consider and decide what measures should be adopted. In the last session of Parliament, Lord Ellenborough developed a scheme approaching this in character in the House of Lords; but honourable gentlemen will see in the despatches which have been laid on the table, that Lord Canning considers this impossible, and all the members of his Government as well as the members of the Indian Council concur in the opinion that, in the present state of feeling in India, it is quite impossible to revert to a state of things in which the executive Government alone legislated for the country. The opposite extreme is the desire which is natural to Englishmen wherever they be, that they should have a representative body to make the laws by which they are to be governed. I am sure, however, that every one who considers the condition of India will see that it is utterly impossible to constitute such a body in that country. You cannot possibly assemble at any one place in India persons who shall be the real representatives of the various classes of the native population of the country. It is quite true that when you diminish the area for which legislation is to extend, you diminish the difficulty of such a plan. In Ceylon, which is not more extensive than a large collectorate in India, you have a legislative body consisting partly of Englishmen and partly of natives, and I do not know that the Government has worked unsuccessfully; but with the extended area with which we have to deal in India, it would be physically impossible to constitute such a body··············To talk of a native representation is therefore to talk of that which is simply and utterly impossible. Then comes the question to what extent we can have a representation of the English settlers in India. No doubt, it would not be difficult to obtain a representation of their interests; but I must say that of all the governing or Legislative bodies, none is so dangerous or so mischievous as one which represents a dominant race ruling over an extended native population. All experience teaches us that where a dominant race rules another, the mildest form

of Government is despotism, ······I cannot therefore consent to create a powerful body of such a character".

The constitution of India was considerably modified by the Indian Councils Act of 1861. It restored the function of legislation to provincial Governments, but whereas, before the Act of 1833, no provincial legislation required the previous sanction of the Governor-General under this Act, it was made a condition precedent to such legislation in certain cases, and all Acts passed by the Local Councils required the subsequent assent of the Governor-General besides that of the Governor. It created Legislative Councils for the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras, and empowered the Governor-General to establish a Legislative Council for Bengal. But the most important feature of the Act was the expansion of the Indian Legislative Council and the introduction of the non-official element into that Council, as well as into the Provincial Councils. The Governor-General was empowered to nominate, in addition to the members of the Executive Council, additional members, not less than six nor more than twelve in number, for purposes of legislation, and half of these additional members were to be non-officials. In the Provincial Councils also, the proportion of non-official members was to be one-half out of a minimum of four and a maximum of eight. These provisions for the nomination of non-official members were availed of for the purpose of nominating Indians, and ever since the enactment of the Councils Act of 1861, there has been

no Council without an admixture of the Indian element, however small it might be; but it deserves to be noted, that the Act itself did not specifically provide for the nomination of Indians as additional members, and that for many years, the Indians who were nominated did not represent the growing *Intelligentsia* of the country but were drawn exclusively either from the ranks of chiefs or from the landed aristocracy. "Honourable gentlemen will have noticed," said Sir Charles Wood in his speech in the House of Commons, "the great success which has attended the association with us of the Talukdars of Oudh and of the Sardars in the Punjab in the duties of administering the revenue, and Lord Canning has borne testimony to the admirable manner in which they have performed their duties. I believe greater advantages will result from admitting the Native Chiefs to co-operate with us for legislative purposes; they will no longer feel, as they have hitherto done, that they are excluded from the management of the affairs in their own country, and nothing, I am persuaded, will tend more to conciliate to our rule the minds of natives of high rank."

But though the Councils were reformed so as to include the non-official and also the Indian element, their function was strictly limited to legislation, and they were expressly forbidden to transact any business except the consideration and enactment of legislative measures or to entertain any motion except a motion for leave to introduce a Bill, or having reference to a Bill actually introduced.

No discussion of the Budget, no interpellations or resolutions were allowed. As Herbert Cowell rightly describes them in "The Courts and legislative authorities in India", "the Councils are not deliberative bodies with respect to any subject but that of the immediate legislation before them They cannot inquire into grievances, call for information, or examine the conduct of the executive. The acts of administration cannot be impugned nor can they be properly defended in such assemblies, except with reference to the particular measure under discussion."

The system of Government as modified by the Councils Act of 1861 lasted till 1892, when again it it was reformed by the Act passed in that year. The intervening period of thirty years witnessed three important events which deserve to be mentioned. Legislative decentralization had been restored by the Act of 1861; but it had not been accompanied by financial decentralization, with the result that provincial Governments were seriously handicapped by the necessity of referring to the Indian Government for every item of expenditure. Besides, as there were no sources of revenue which they might regard as their own, either exclusively or partially, they had no incentive to develop those sources or explore new ones, or even to practise economy. In 1870, therefore, the Government of Lord Mayo issued a resolution whereby a scheme of financial decentralization was introduced in the provinces. Certain departments, viz., Jails, Registration, Police,

Education, Medical Services, Printing, Roads, Miscellaneous Public Improvements and Civil Buildings, were made over to Provincial Governments, and a fixed lump sum was assigned to each of them as an Imperial grant for carrying on the administration. They were given the departmental receipts from these sources, but if the grant was found to be inadequate, they must exercise their powers of taxation and find out new sources of revenue. They were permitted to appropriate the grant to the several departments just as they liked, and if any balance remained, it did not lapse, but could be treated as a balance to the credit of the local Government that had managed to keep it. Lord Mayo expected great benefits from this measure of financial decentralization. "The operation of this resolution", Lord Mayo said, "in its full meaning and integrity will afford opportunities for the development of self-government, for strengthening Municipal institutions and for the association of Natives and Europeans to a greater extent than heretofore, in the administration of affairs". The system of financial devolution thus introduced by Lord Mayo was modified and improved by Lord Lytton and Lord Ripon. Heads of revenue were divided into Imperial, provincial, and partly Imperial and partly provincial; the revenue derived from the first was treated exclusively as Imperial, that derived from the second, exclusively as provincial, and that derived from the third was divided between them in definite proportions. The list of provincial subjects was also enlarged so as to include Land Revenue,

Excise, Stamps, Law and Justice, and all other subjects now regarded as provincial. Thus, subjects were divided into Imperial and Provincial, and the administration of the latter was to be carried on from revenues derived from fully or partially provincialised sources. It must, however, be noted that there was no attempt at all to introduce the federal principle in legislation or financial administration.

The second important event was the assumption by Her Majesty the Queen in 1876 of the title "Empress of India". A proclamation was issued, notifying the assumption, and at a grand Durbar held at Delhi, the fact was announced with great *eclat* and solemnity to the Princes and people of India. Lord Salisbury who held the office of the Secretary of State for India at the time cherished grandiose conceptions of Imperial magnificence, and thought that the assumption of the title of Empress of India by Her Majesty the Queen would greatly impress the Oriental mind with its traditional notions of absolute sovereignty, with the unrivalled majesty and prowess of Great Britain. Little did he realise even with his gift of imagination that the event, ceremonial and comparatively small though it was, would produce an undercurrent of national self-humiliation among the people of India. The third and most important event was the encouragement given by Lord Ripon to local self-government. Lord Ripon realized soon after coming to India that the development of local self-government had not kept pace with the growth of education

and public spirit among the people, and that even in the comparatively small sphere of Municipal administration, official guidance and control had aimed more at efficiency than education of the people in the art of local self-government and evoking in them the sense of responsibility. He therefore issued in 1882 a resolution in which he strongly advocated the encouragement and extension of local self-government and emphasized the true cardinal principle that local self-governing institutions were chiefly desirable, not as a means of improvement in administration, but as an instrument of political and popular education. " It is not uncommonly asserted ", he observed in his memorable resolution, " that the people of this country are themselves entirely indifferent to the principle of self-government : that they take but little interest in public matters; and that they prefer to have such affairs managed for them by Government officers. The Governor-General-in-Council does not attach much value to this theory. It represents, no doubt, the point of view which commends itself to many active and well-intentioned District officers ; and the people of India are, there can be equally no doubt, remarkably tolerant of existing facts. But as education advances, there is rapidly growing up all over the country an intelligent class of public-spirited men whom it is not only bad policy, but sheer waste of power, to fail to utilise". There can be no doubt that the measures adopted by Lord Ripon to promote and extend local self-government constituted

an important factor in the awakening of those national sentiments and aspirations which led to the movement for *Swaraj*.

The Act of 1892 not only enlarged the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils, but also extended their functions, and provided for the introduction, though indirectly, of the elective principle. The Governor-General's legislative council was reconstituted as under :—

(1) The Governor-General.

(2) Members of the Executive Council.

(3) Six additional members, being nominated officials, besides the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, ex officio.

(4) Six additional members being nominated non-officials.

(5) Five additional members. Out of these five, one was to be elected by the non-official members of each of the four Provincial Councils and the remaining fifth by the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce. But their election was not *ipso facto* binding on the Government; all it meant was that they were elected for the purpose of being recommended for nomination, to the Government who might or might not accept the recommendation, though, in practice, it was invariably accepted. The same method of election was adopted in the case of the provincial councils also. The theory of the Act of 1861 was that the legislative Councils were merely

legislative bodies with the sole function of passing laws. This theory was modified by the Act of 1892, to the extent of giving them the right of asking questions and discussing the budget. The budget, however, could not be voted upon, and the right of interpellation was to be exercised under certain conditions. The right of asking supplementary questions or of moving resolutions was still withheld. Nor was any attempt made to create an electorate.

The most important question that attracted attention in connection with the Councils Act of 1892 was the introduction of the elective principle. Mr. Schwann brought an amendment urging the introduction of the elective principle and declaring that without it, no reform of the councils would prove satisfactory to the Indian people or compatible with the good government of India. An interesting debate took place on this question, to which Mr. Gladstone made a notable contribution. Mr. Schwann stressed the point that the non-introduction of the elective principle was a serious defect on account of which the Bill would not be accepted by the Indian people as anything like an instalment of what they desired, of what they required, and of what was necessary for their happiness. Mr. Gladstone ingeniously argued that the Bill, though it did not provide for the elective principle in so many clear words, did not at the same time rule it out and that, therefore, there was, really speaking, very little difference between the Bill and the amendment. He said :—

"The great question we have before us—the question of real and profound interest—is the question of introduction of the elective element into the Government of India. That question overshadows and absorbs everything else; it is a question of vital importance and also at the same time, a question of great difficulty. I am not at all disposed to ask the Governor-General or the Secretary of State at once to produce large and imposing results. What I wish is that their first steps should be of a nature to be genuine, and whatever amount of scope they give to the elective principle, it shall be real."

He also deprecated a division on the Bill and appealed to both Houses to support it unanimously. Mr. Schwann withdrew the amendment, and the Bill was passed in the original form. Mr. Gladstone's views and exhortation, however, did not fail to produce their natural effect, and though in the rules framed under the Act, the term 'election' was scrupulously eschewed, the recommendations made by the bodies to which the right of recommendation had been given, were accepted as a matter of course, and an appreciable proportion of the non-official seats was practically filled by election. Such is the way in which British statesmanship advances on the path of reform!

The Councils Act of 1892 did not satisfy the demands of the Indian National Congress; nevertheless, there can be no doubt that it was the first triumph of India's struggle for *Swaraj*. "It was an attempt" says a keen student of the Indian political movement "between the official view of the Councils as pocket legislatures and the educated Indian view of them as embryo parliaments. It marks a definite parting of

the ways, the first mile-stone on a road leading eventually to political dead-lock and a strangling of executive Government. While no efforts were made to enlarge the boundaries of the educated class, to provide them with any training in responsible government or to lay the foundations of a future electorate to control them, the Act deliberately attempted to dally with the elective idea."

The utter inadequacy of the reforms introduced by the Councils Act became clear in a few years. But a long period of internal growth and awakening was to elapse before the next victory was won in the cause of Indian self-Government.

CHAPTER IV

INTERNAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

I

THE period that elapsed between the enactment of the Councils Act of 1892 and the introduction of the Morley-Minto Reforms in 1909 was marked by great internal growth and development. It was a fitting preparation for the next victory in the struggle for SWARAJ. The advantages afforded by the Act were used to the fullest extent by the educated classes. The introduction of the elective principle brought into the Legislative Councils men who had occupied the front rank in the public life of the country. Sir (then Mr.) P. M. Mehta and Mr. G. K. Gokhale led the small popular party in the Imperial Legislative Council. The Provincial Councils also contained some of the ablest and most popular leaders in the provinces. The presence of such men infused a new spirit into the Legislatures. For the first time, the views and aspirations of New India found clear and fearless expression in the Council Chambers. So trenchant were Mr. Mehta's criticisms that the official world soon began to realize that it could no longer ignore with impunity the voice of public opinion. Mr. Gokhale's manner was different; but his advocacy of the cause of India was marked by such fullness of detailed knowledge, such

persuasive eloquence and such sweet reasonableness blended with measured vigour, that he soon became an outstanding figure in Indian politics. In short, the opportunities afforded by the liberalisation of the Councils were so splendidly used that the need for further constitutional reforms became soon apparent.

The Indian National Congress accepted the reforms for what they were worth, but expressed its dissatisfaction with the narrow and illiberal spirit with which they were worked by the Indian and Provincial Governments. Mr. Alfred Webb, in his address as President of the Congress in 1894, said:

> "The administrative mutilation of the manifest intentions of Parliament in framing the Indian Councils Act is much to be deplored. I see that complaints have been made in every Province where the enlarged Councils are established, that the distribution of seats for representation of the people is most unsatisfactory, and that while some interests are over-represented, other important interests are not represented at all. This is not in accordance with the expressed views of British statesmen on both sides of the House when the Bill was discussed. We have here a striking instance of the extent to which administration can defeat the intentions of legislation."

There was at this time a feeling that India should be represented directly in British Parliament. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, who was elected Member of Parliament in the general election of 1892, urged that "there should be some reasonable direct representation from India in the House of Commons". The same view was expressed by Mr. Gokhale in his evidence before

the Royal Commission on Indian expenditure. He proposed that the Provincial Legislative Councils should return one member each to the Imperial Parliament. "Six men in a House of 670", he said, "would introduce no disturbing factor, while the House will be in the position to ascertain Indian public opinion on the various questions coming up before it, in a constitutional manner. Here again I rely more upon the moral effect of the course proposed than upon any actual results likely to be directly achieved." The National Congress did not, however, press this demand for representation in Parliament. Probably, its leaders decided that the question was not within the range of practical politics.

II

The new Councils played but a small part in the further political development of India. The forces that really made for the political progress of India subsequent to the Councils Act of 1892 were other and more vital than the Legislatures with their extremely limited functions and powers. The reform of the Councils synchronised with the birth of a new spirit in India. Hitherto, educated classes had been in revolt against the ancient civilization and the old order of things. The spirit of national self-depreciation had been in the air. The defects of their ancient civilization made a deeper impression upon them than its merits. They looked outwards to the West rather than inwards into themselves and the past of their country. They were almost obsessed with the

thought that India would not have fallen but for some inherent and radical defects in her civilisation. Hinduism, Hindu philosophy, ethics, social customs and institutions were all arraigned before the bar of critical reason, and condemned as the root cause of national decadence and fall. The West was idealized and idolized as the acme of social and political perfection, and it was thought that India could have no hope and no future, unless she westernized herself as much and as quickly as possible. Discontent with the existing state of things was rife. But it was the discontent of a mind utterly out of joint, overpowered by a keen sense of uncongenial and unprogressive environments and traditions which were felt to be serious clogs fettering the full and free development of India. This spirit of revolt was the first reaction of India to the tremendous impact of the West, and was quite natural in the then state of the Indian community. But with the efflux of time that dissipated the first impressions, it was transmuted into the spirit of self-conscious nationalism. A truer sense of perspective was awakened, and West and East came to be seen and understood better, both in themselves and in their mutual relations. Henceforth, there were two distinct strains in the Indian National movement of thought. One was that the Indian civlisation was on the whole self-sufficient and self-progressive, that the real need of India was to awaken the sense of national self-respect and self-esteem and to revive her ancient ideals which had fallen into decay; the other, though duly alive to

the real merits of her ancient civilization, was that it was lacking in certain essentials which must be assimilated, and which could only be supplied by the West, and that, therefore, what was necessary for the future progress of the country was, along with the cultivation of national self-respect and self-esteem, to reform the various Indian communities in the light of modern knowledge and modern conditions of national life, and make them thoroughly fit to discharge the new responsibilities which it was impossible to avoid even if they wished to do so.

Several events took place which contributed, each in its own away, to the rise and growth of this spirit of nationalism. At the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893, Hinduism was represented by Swami Vivekananda whose able presentation of its cardinal teachings made a profound impression upon the American mind and removed the impression, then widely prevalent, that Hinduism was nothing but a tissue of falsehoods, errors, superstitions, diabolical practices. Swami Vivekananda was a forceful personality, and his influence upon young India, particularly young Bengal, has been deep, lasting, wholesome. Deeply read in the philosophies and religions of the East and the West, he preached that the essential principles of Hinduism were, not only in perfect harmony with the latest developments of modern scientific thought, but also capable of reforming the prevalent Indian modes of thought and life, and readjusting them to the needs of the unprecedented

situation created by the impact of the West on the East. He appealed to his countrymen to realise those principles and apply them to the solution of the new complex problems of modern India. He had an intense faith in the spiritual mission of India and in her power to fulfil that mission. At the same time, he believed that the full realization of that mission was impossible without political freedom, without congenial political *milieu* ; and he therefore actively encouraged the new political aspirations with which the heart of young India was beating. Though a *Sanyasi,* who had given up all worldly interests, he was yet a patriot, and his heart bled at the idea of the sufferings of his country. His English disciple, Sister Nivedita, speaks thus of his love of India : " Throughout those years ", she says ", in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed."

Swami Vivekananda was also a man of action. He thought that India had lost her old balance between the material and spiritual sides of true civilization, that, latterly, she had suffered from the disease of excessive thought, with the result that the strong vigorous life of action had been neglected, and thought itself had become effete and unreal. He therefore impressed upon the people the duty of leading a life, not of mere dreamy contemplation, but of vigorous, social action. He was to Modern India what Wangyangming was to the Chinese under the Ming dynasty in the sixteenth century, or the School of Oyomei to the Japanese on the eve of the Restoration. The funda-

mental principle of Wangyangming and the School of Oyomei was that knowledge was useless, unless realized in action. It was this great and vital principle that Swami Vivekananda impressed upon his countrymen. The rich knowledge, enshrined in the noble teachings of Hinduism, had not, he said, had its full effects, because it had not been expressed in action; nay, what action there was, was not in harmony with that knowledge. And he practised what he preached. No religious teacher worked more for the uplift of the masses, for elevating the status of the pariah, the poor, the down-trodden or for relieving poverty, disease, and distress.

Such a thinker, patriot, reformer and Sanyasi was bound to exercise great influence upon contemporary Indian thought and life. Young India became nationalist and her nationalism realised its true nature, that is, it was informed, illumined, and inspired by a strong consciousness of the past achievements of India, of the glorious part which, in spite of the vicissitudes, aye, the tragic vicissitudes, of her national existence, she had played in human history, and of the high and noble mission which, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, she was called upon to play in the modern world. Swami Vivekananda might well be called the father of Modern Indian Nationalism; he largely created it and also embodied in his own life its highest and noblest elements.

The movement started by Swami Vivekananda was helped by the work of the Theosophical Society.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant, the Society and its principles and activities began to receive increasing attention from the Indian people. Mrs. Besant glorified the ancient thought of India, and openly proclaimed her faith in the superiority of the whole Hindu system to the vaunted civilisation of the West. Further, some of the social and religious customs, beliefs and institutions which Western-educated Hindus condemned as superstitious and irrational, she interpreted in such a way as to naturally flatter the national vanity of the people. The institution of caste had aroused the greatest dissatisfaction among the educated Hindus. If there was any institution which they detested as being really at the root of their national fall, it was caste; but even that institution was defended by the school of Theosophists led by Mrs. Besant. Many educated Hindus fell under her magic spell, and began to think that, after all, much might be said in favour of the old system of four castes. What could be more rousing than the repeated insistence by this wonderful European lady, that the Eastern civilisation was essentially superior to the Western, and that the national fall of the Hindus was due not to any inferiority of that civilization, but to the fact that they forgot its noble ideals?

With the advent of Swami Vivekananda and Mrs. Besant begins the period of national revival. But there is a difference between the two movements led by them respectively. Swami Vikekananda's movement was a movement both of national revival and reform;

he aimed at reviving Hinduism and Hindu ideals, and also at reforming Hindu Society so as to make it fit to bear the serious responsibilities of modern world life. In Mrs. Besant's movement, at all events, in its early stages, the note of revival was so dominant that it drowned the note of reform. Besides, the spirit of Nationalism which, along with spirituality and happily blending with it, was a master passion with Swami Vivekananda, was lacking in her movement. On the other hand, during at least the first period of her movement, when she was developing her scheme of the Central Hindu College at Benares and trying to obtain for it the support of the Government, the political discontent of the educated classes did not receive much sympathy from her; she attributed it to the lack of religious education in the Western system of education introduced in India. Nevertheless, in spite of this difference, these two movements were complementary, and their result was to arouse and foster the spirit of Nationalism.

While the Indian movement was being thus moulded by this new spirit of Nationalism, events took place in the Bombay Presidency, which, though only provincial in their character, contributed, in their effects, to swell the rising tide of Nationalism. In the province of Bombay and particularly in the Deccan, the spirit of conservative Nationalism found its ablest and most powerful exponent in Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Mr. Tilak, as the sequel will show, is one of the makers of new India; he has played a most remark-

able part in her struggle for SWARAJ. He began life as an educationist, having been one of the founders of the Deccan Education Society at Poona. He first came into prominence in 1891 as a powerful champion of Hindu orthodoxy, by his vehement opposition to the Age of Consent Bill, and as a strong critic of the Government. But, underlying and inspiring all his activities, was the spirit of conservative Nationalism. But before he fully realised his mission and began to work strenuously for its fulfilment, another exponent of Nationalism, Mr. Vishnu Krishna Chiplunkar, who died in 1882 at the young age of 32, and with whom Mr. Tilak was associated in founding the Deccan Education Society, had already prepared the soil. Owing to his premature death, Mr. Chiplunkar did not become an all-India figure. But he was a very powerful writer, and for seven years, he preached through his magazine the gospel of Nationalism, and awakened his countrymen to a sense of the high worth of their ancient inheritance. His nationalism was not inspired by hatred of the West and Western civilization: on the contrary, he had the fairness to see their many great qualities, and no other Indian cherished a greater admiration for the virile English literature of which he was a devoted student, and for the vigorous English national character. He appealed to the people not to be carried away by the dazzling superficialities of Western civilization, but to assimilate those qualities of the West which had made England and other Western countries great and

powerful. At the same time, he urged that the prevalent spirit of National self-depreciation was harmful; those, he said, who did not feel pride in the past, could feel no hope for the future. In a way, his task was not so difficult as in other provinces. The Deccan had not been under British rule and Western influences for such a length of time as Bengal and Madras; the Marathas are a practical people with a strong grip on the realities of life, and therefore possessed of a judgment which is seldom prone to extremes; and their traditions of national independence and of stout resistance to the aggressions of foreigners had been comparatively fresh. For all these reasons, the spirit of revolt against the ancient Hindu civilisation, and social and religious order had never spread far and wide in the Deccan.

Mr. Tilak continued the work begun by Vishnu Krishna Chiplunkar, and in course of time, attained the position of the unchallenged leader of conservative nationalism. He opposed the Age of Consent Bill, an extremely moderate piece of social legislation, on the ground that social reform must not be forced by legislation, particularly by a foreign Government; and he led the agitation against it with an ability and vigour that at once marked him out as an outstanding popular leader. He reorganised the Ganapati Festival, gave it a public character, and made it an instrument of popular education in patriotism and nationalism. He strongly and persistently attacked social reformers and the social reform movement, and impressed upon the

people that true social reform must be based on national lines, and not made in a spirit of apish imitation of the customs and institutions of the ruling race. He defended caste and the Hindu social and religious order in general, and condemned the movement for social and religious reform as based on, and being inspired by, false and unsuitable Western ideals and conceptions of society.

In 1888, Mr. Tilak became the sole responsible editor of the KESARI, and, through it, exercised an influence upon the literate classes in the Marathi-speaking Districts, which it is impossible to exaggerate. The KESARI has been to them what the London TIMES has been to the English. In the hands of Mr. Tilak, it became the most powerful and popular organ of conservative nationalism. In matters social and religious, it stood for national revival, not reform, and vehemently opposed all causes and movements that went against the grain of Hindu orthodoxy. In politics, its deepest and strongest note was nationalistic; it mercilessly attacked the alien bureaucracy, and exposed its many sins of commission and omission. It made its ever-widening circle of readers realize the evils of foreign domination and impressed upon them the paramount duty of cultivating patriotism, national self-respect, national unity, the spirit of resistance to wrong and injustice, and the spirit of self-sacrifice. It further taught the people the Western methods of agitation. We have already stated that Mr. Tilak reorganised the Ganapati festival and made it an instrument of

popular education and of the revival of the national spirit. In 1895, he started another patriotic and popular movement for raising a memorial to Shivaji, the great founder of the Maratha Empire, and for instituting a new festival in his honour to be celebrated every year on the anniversary of his birthday. A mass meeting was held at Poona for the purpose of raising funds for the memorial, and attended by all classes of people including representatives of the ancient aristocratic families. The Shivaji festival was inaugurated, and ever since, has become an annual function throughout the Maratha territory. There can be no doubt that the festival has contributed to the revival of nationalism among the Marathas.

Thus, there arose and grew a distinct and strong movement of conservative nationalism; but it did not absorb the whole current of thought and activity. Side by side with it, the older movement, which might be called progressive nationalism, also went on, though it was now freed from its tendency towards excessive national self-depreciation. That movement had been led in Maharashtra, first by Mr. Ranade, a genius with varied activities, who was, in fact, the first to breathe new life into the dry bones of Maharashtra; and later on, found an able and powerful exponent in Mr. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. Mr. Agarkar and Mr. Tilak worked together for several years in the Deccan Education Society; but later on, serious differences arose between them; and while Mr. Tilak led the movement of national revival and

conservative nationalism, Mr. Agarkar became the leader of the movement of national reform and progressive nationalism. Mr. Agarkar was no less a nationalist than Mr. Tilak; both keenly realised the great and insidious evils of foreign domination. Like Mr. Tilak, he also hated the ignoble spirit of mere blind imitation of the ruling race, nor did he decry the ancient civilization of India or fail to recognise its merits. But he frankly and freely realised its faults and limitations, and maintained that a living civilization was a continuous growth, and that, therefore, the Hindu civilization ought to grow by assimilating all that was good and noble in the Western civilization with which it had come into contact, and, to some extent, into conflict. Above all, he urged that thought ought to be free, and that in case of conflict between reason and authority, the latter must yield empire to the former. He was a powerful writer and edited the KESARI before it passed into the hands of Mr. Tilak in 1888. During the time he was its editor, the KESARI was an organ of progressive nationalism. In 1888, he started another paper, called the SUDHARAK or the Reformer, and until his death in 1895, ably and fearlessly championed the cause of social reform and progressive nationalism. He was a great apostle of liberty and believed that, without its free play, no progress could be made or be lasting. His writings were characterised by the free criticism of life that marked the Greek spirit. They ranged over the whole domain of Hindu Social reform. With rare keenness, insight,

and vigour, they exposed the manifold evils that were eating into the vitals of the Hindu Society, and seriously impaired its efficiency. Every social or socio-religious institution, custom, usage and rite was subjected to the most searching analysis and criticism, and its evils pointed out with remarkable boldness and vigour. The status of woman, equality of the sexes, higher education of women, choice marriage, widow re-marriage, caste, the attitude of the Hindus towards the depressed classes, their funeral rites and ceremonies, their notions of cleanliness and pollution, their modes of dress, all these and many other questions, great and small, connected with Hindu social and religious life, were discussed with a freedon of thought and a fearlessness of criticism which are very rare in the whole domain of Indian literature. And all this Mr. Agarkar did, not as a mere speculative thinker, not as a mere detached observer, but as a practical reformer who ardently desired that his country should be great and command respect from the whole civilised world. In a remarkable passage which aptly illustrates the great heights of thought to which he could soar, he says :

> We have as much right to inaugurate new customs and usages as the ancient Rishis ; we enjoy the same favour of God as the ancient Acharyas ; we are endowed with the same, if not greater, faculty of discrimination between right and wrong as they ; our hearts melt with pity for the depressed classes much more than theirs did ; our knowledge of the universe and its cause is greater, not less, than theirs ; hence, we shall observe only those injunctions laid down by them which we deem beneficial and replace those which we think harmful, by others. It is on these lines that

reform must be made; it is useless to quote one sage as against another and try to reconcile them all.

Such was the spirit of Mr. Agarkar, and his influence has been great and lasting. If the cause of social reform has made greater progress in the Deccan than in any other province, it is due largely to his teachings. He represents what may be called the rationalistic and liberal element in the nationalist movement of India. Both that element and the conservative element represented by Mr. Tilak are essential to the steady progress of a society; and, if to-day, the Marathas present on the whole a happy blend of the two, it is due to the action and interaction of both these elements.

III

The political development of India subsequent to the enactment of the Councils Act in 1892, was influenced by external as well as internal events. The first external event of this kind was the War between China and Japan in 1894. Though it was a fratricidal war between one Asiatic nation and another, its significance was fully realized by Indian leaders. They saw, in the victory won by Japan, the dawn of a new era for the whole of Asia. Mr. Tilak, whose views on matters like this might be regarded as thoroughly representative, wrote in the KESARI that the condition of Japan was a clear indication of the revolution that was taking place all over Asia, and it was bound to inspire hope in the minds of all Asiatic peoples. The crushing defeat

inflicted upon China could not but, it was thought, lead to her awakening, and when once China and other Asiatic nations were awakened, the ultimate result would be to check the Imperialistic ambitions of Western powers. Such was the train of thought awakened in the minds of the Indian people by the Japanese victory over China, and naturally it had its share of influence in shaping the future political development of India.

In 1896, India was visited by two calamities, famine and plague. The past experiences of famine had led the Government to consider the question of famine relief on more or less scientific lines, and they had framed a body of rules for giving relief which were embodied in what was called the Famine Code. Mr. Tilak organised a propaganda with the object of teaching the agriculturists their rights under the Code. Mass meetings were held even in villages, and perhaps for the first time in the history of the National Congress, the poor starving peasants were made to realize that their interests and welfare were an object of deep concern with their educated countrymen. The moral effects of a movement like this were beyond exaggeration, and the bureaucracy was not slow to perceive this aspect. They misrepresented and condemned the agitation as a no-rent campaign and prosecutions were instituted against some of the lecturers whom Mr. Tilak had deputed to carry on propaganda in famine-stricken areas. The immediate, practical results of the movement were not great, but its net result was that even

the ignorant and poverty-stricken agriculturists began to feel, though faintly, that they were human beings and had some rights which they were entitled to demand.

In the same year, bubonic plague broke out at Bombay, Poona and other places, and the Government of Bombay adopted very stringent measures which, they hoped, would succeed in stamping it out. British soldiers were employed in the delicate task of enforcing these measures and there were serious complaints that in discharging their duties for which they were, in fact, absolutely ill-qualified, they wounded the religious susceptibilities of the people and even committed gross outrages. A few young men, thirsting for revenge, formed a conspiracy to murder the Collector who was believed to have been responsible for the policy of employing white soldiers on plague duty, and the design was carried out on the day of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, while he and another European officer were returning home from a state banquet at the Government House. The other Officer, Lieut. Ayerst was shot down on the spot, while the Collector, Mr. Rand, suffered serious injuries from which he subsequently died.

The motive for the murders could be easily guessed, but the conspirators themselves eluded detection, in spite of the best detective skill and efforts, for a long time. The Government of Bombay adopted a policy of stern repression and established a reign of terror, particularly in Poona. Concluding that the murders

must have been instigated, directly or indirectly, by writings in the Vernacular press, they instituted prosecutions for sedition against the KESARI, and several other Marathi papers. Mr. Tilak, editor of the KESARI, was arrested at Bombay on 27th July 1897; and on the next day, the Natu brothers, two of the Sardars in the Deccan, were deported under an old rusty regulation enacted soon after the overthrow of the Peshwas in 1818. These two brothers were suspected of anti-British feelings, and the Government thought that they must have been connected with the murders. They therefore raked up an old regulation designed for quite different times and circumstances, and deported them without trial.

The prosecution of Mr. Tilak was an important event in the history of the political development of India. Mr. Tilak became a name to conjure with; to the young men who were receiving education in schools and colleges, the citizens of tomorrow, he became *their beau ideal.* The calm and indomitable courage with which he faced the prosecution raised him in the estimation even of his opponents, and endeared him to all classes of his countrymen. Sinister suggestions were made to him that the Government would withdraw the prosection if he tendered an apology. This was the first important political prosecution; a previous prosecution against a Bengali paper in 1891 had been withdrawn on the editor offering an apology. The terrors of the jail had not yet been overcome, and the idea of brave suffering for the mother country, taken root in the

public mind. Mr. Tilak, however, fully realised his duties as a public leader, and proudly disdaining ignoble surrender, preferred imprisonment. Though his own contrymen in the jury found him not guilty, the verdict of the majority went against him, and he was sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment.

The moral effects of the prosecution and of Mr. Tilak's attitude towards it were great; he became a political and moral force, and, thereafter, exercised an increasing influence upon the political development of India. He taught his countrymen how to fight and suffer for the rights and liberties of their country; and the lesson has been so well learnt that it has now become a part of the moral content of political thought and life in India. There can be no doubt that his sufferings in the cause of national freedom constitute a glorious chapter in the annals of modern India.

IV

While the public mind of India was being thus sorely tried by plague, famine and political repression, Lord Curzon succeeded Lord Elgin as Governor-General of India. Though not even forty years old at the time, Lord Curzon had already made his mark as a politician of remarkable abilities, great force of character and single-minded devotion to Imperial interests. He had held office as Under-Secretary of State for India and, in that capacity, piloted, with no small distinction, the Councils Act of 1892 through the House of Commons. He enjoyed almost every advantage which gifts of nature and circum-

stance could bestow, and his fine speeches made as Viceroy-designate breathed a lofty conception of the spirit which should animate the head of the Indian Government in the performance of his great task. His appointment, therefore, as Governor-General and Viceroy of India, was hailed with general feelings of satisfaction and the Indian National Congress sent him a cordial message of welcome on his landing at Bombay.

But though Lord Curzon's *regime* began under such favourable auspices, the very qualities of his vigorous and self-confident personality ultimately produced a situation which intensified popular discontent and gave a new orientation to India's political movement. He had an immense faith in the efficiency of administration; he also aimed, it must be frankly admitted, at ameliorating the condition of the vast agricultural population of India. But he had no sympathy with the political aspirations of the educated classes; and what was worse still, in enforcing his personal will in everything he undertook, he, consciously or unconsciously, trampled on the feelings of one class or another. His hostility towards those aspirations became so pronounced in the latter part of his career, that he refused to show the Indian National Congress even the courtesy of receiving a deputation on its behalf. He succeeded in infusing new life into every department of the Government, but his iron will knew no compromise with the rising political aspirations of the Indian people, and he left the country

in a state of much more serious and wide-spread discontent than he had found it.

V

Another important factor in the development of the Indian political movement was the momentous struggle between Russia and Japan, and the brilliant and decisive victory won by the latter. It is impossible to exaggerate the effects of the Japanese victory on the Indian mind. The fortunes of the Russo-Japanese war were followed with the keenest interest by the Indian people. The educated classes, and in particular, the young student world, began to study the history of Japan and to enquire into the causes that made her so great and powerful, and enabled her to inflict such a crushing defeat upon one of the greatest military Powers of the West. Her successful resistance against the aggressive designs of Russia was attributed —and rightly—to her unique patriotism, spirit of self-sacrifice and national unity. These virtues, it was thought, could work miracles, and enable even a subject and disarmed country like India, to free herself from the crushing bondage of England. The imagination of young men of India was so much fired by the wonderful achievements of Japan that some of them even dreamed of settling in that country, winning the confidence of the Japanese, and securing their help and co-operation in the emancipation of their own country. The rise of Japan was regarded as a divine dispensation, heralding the dawn of a new era of freedom and

power for all the enslaved nations of the Orient. India, like all the rest of the East, throbbed with new hopes and aspirations.

VI

The period under review also witnessed great intellectual and moral renaissance. Not only did higher education spread more and more, bringing every year under its influence a steadily increasing number of young men, but the liberal and radical political thought of the West cast a magic spell over the Indian mind, and attempts were made, by means of translations in the more important vernacular languages to diffuse the teachings of Mill, Spencer, Morley and other thinkers among those who could not read their works in the original. The Vernacular press grew in numbers and influence, and became a powerful instrument of popular education. Poetry and the drama reflected the new spirit. Associations were started for elevating the status of the depressed classes and for promoting equality and social intercourse among the different castes. The duty of social service was increasingly recognised and volunteer corps were formed for helping the sick, the poor and the suffering. The economic and industrial development of the country also received greater attention from the leaders and the wealthy capitalists. In short, India was on the threshold of a new national life.

CHAPTER V

PARTITION OF BENGAL AND

While India was passing through the stage of national development described in the preceding chapter, and the tide of public feeling against his administration was rising, Lord Curzon launched his thunderbolt—the Partition of Bengal. The leaders of Bengal had repeatedly warned him against that obnoxious measure; in 1904, the Indian National Congress had protested against any proposals of partition, and even made constructive suggestions for meeting the heavy burden of administration imposed by the extensive area of the province. But what were the wishes and feelings of the Indian people before the autocratic and omnipotent will of Lord Curzon? A subject people has no right to have strong feelings, much less to express them with such vigour and persistence as were shown in this case. For an Imperialist Power to yield to an agitation skilfully engineered by a handful of educated malcontents would create a dangerous precedent which must never be established; the *ukase* was therefore issued on 20th July, 1905, and the partition itself actually effected on 16th October of the year.

The general policy of Lord Curzon, particularly with regard to the political aspirations of the Indian people, and the high-handed and defiant manner in which he carried out the partition of Bengal, led to serious and far-reaching consequences of which he himself could not have dreamed. Hitherto, the basic principle which had consistently inspired the programme and methods of work of the National Congress was a strong faith in the ultimate responsiveness of the British Government to Indian public opinion. Let public opinion be articulate and organised; let Indian leaders enlighten the Government on the wants, grievances and aspirations of the people; and the grievances will be redressed, the wants met, and the aspirations satisfied. Such was the ruling principle of the Congress. But this simple faith was slowly undermined by the bitter experiences of the past few years; and it was all but utterly destroyed by Lord Curzon's action in decreeing the partition of Bengal. Henceforth, the Congress was divided into two parties, the moderates and the extremists, with a considerable preponderance of the latter. Outside the Congress, ideas of national independence which even centuries of foreign subjection can never completely destroy, began to float in the air, and possess the minds of an increasing number of young men. And as history does not record a single instance of national independence having been won by constitutional and peaceful means, many of those who cherished dreams of national independence, formed secret societies and relied on methods of violence to

gain their object. Even those who did not think of throwing off the British yoke felt that unless a strong and vigorous policy was adopted by the Congress, even its most moderate and reasonable demands would continue to be flouted by the Government. They further thought that it was high time to formulate a definite political ideal and to declare that India would not be satisfied with anything short of full realization of that ideal. In short, the partition of Bengal led, within the National Congress, to the formulation of a political ideal, *viz.*, the ideal of colonial self-Government, as will be seen from the sequel, and the adoption of strong and vigorous measures for asserting the national will; and, outside the Congress, to the rise of a party of national independence, and a violent revolutionary movement. Such was the train of consequences produced by the partition of Bengal and Lord Curzon's general policy; and those consequences have, since then, affected the political development of India.

Under the leadership of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Surendra Nath Bannerjee, who afterwards became a Minister under the reformed constitution introduced in 1921, the Bengalees carried on an unprecedented agitation against the partition. Mass meetings were held in every important town, and, at every meeting, the boycott of British goods was proclaimed. Demonstrations, meetings, strikes, became the order of the day and at some places, the public feeling against the measure manifested itself in riots and disturbances. The

boycott movement was not confined to Bengal, but spread like wild-fire to other provinces also. Lord Curzon's action in enforcing partition against the united opposition of the people was felt as a cruel national wrong, and all India became one in her determination to assert her will, even against the might and majesty of the British *Raj*. The 7th of August—the date on which the boycott was proclaimed was observed as a day of national mourning, and for the first time in her history, the cry of '*Bande Mataram*' (Hail, Motherland) was raised as symbolizing patriotism, national unity and determination to free the Motherland from all humiliation and oppression at the hands of alien rulers.

The general feeling aroused by Lord Curzon's policy was fully reflected in the speech made by Mr. G. K. Gokhale as President of the Indian National Congress held in 1905 at Benares. He said :—

I think, even the most devoted admirer of Lord Curzon cannot claim that he has strengthened the foundations of British rule in India. In some respects, His Lordship will always be recognised as one of the greatest Englishmen that ever came out to this country. His wonderful intellectual gifts, his brilliant powers of expression, his phenomenal energy, his boundless enthusiasm for work—these will ever be a theme of just and unstinted praise. But the gods are jealous, and amidst such lavish endowments, they withheld from him a sympathetic imagination, without which no man can ever understand an alien people; and it is a sad truth that to the end of his administration, Lord Curzon did not really understand the people of India. And thus the man, who professed in all sincerity, before he assumed the reins of office, his great anxiety to show the utmost deference to the feelings and even the prejudices of those over whom he was set to rule, ended

by denouncing in unmeasured terms not only the present generation of Indians but also their remote ancestors and even the ideals of their race which they cherish above everything else; he who, in the early part of his administration, publicly warned the official classes that "official wisdom is not so transcendent as to be superior to the stimulus and guidance" of public opinion and who declared that, "in the present state of India, the opinion of the educated classes is one which it is not statesmanship to ignore or to despise", ended by trampling more systematically upon that opinion than any of his predecessors, and claiming for his own judgment and that of his official colleagues a virtual character of infallibility. The fact is that Lord Curzon came to India with certain fixed ideas. To him, India was a country where the Englishman was to monopolise for all time all power and talk all the while of duty. The Indian's only business was to be governed, and it was a sacrilege, on his part, to have any other aspiration. In his scheme of things there was no room for the educated classes of the country; and having failed to amuse them for any length of time by an empty show of taking them into confidence, he proceeded in the end to repress them. ………………Taking Lord Curzon at his highest, we find him engaged in a Herculean attempt to strengthen the Englishman's monopoly of power in India and stem the tide of popular agitation and discontent by rousing the members of the bureaucracy to a sense of duty similar to his own and raising the standard of administrative efficiency all round. The attempt has failed, as it was bound to fail. Never was discontent in India more acute and wide-spread than when the late Viceroy laid down the reins of office; and as regards the bureaucratic monopoly of power, I think, we are sensibly nearer the time when it will be successfully assailed."

On the subject of the Partition of Bengal, Mr. Gokhale said:—

"A cruel wrong has been inflicted on our Bengalee brethren, and the whole country has been stirred to its

deepest depths in sorrow, and in resentment, as has never been the case before. The scheme of partition, concocted in the dark and carried out in the face of the fiercest opposition that any Government measure has encountered during the last half-a-century, will always stand as a complete illustration of the worst features of bureaucratic rule its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of service interests to those of the governed."

We have already stated that one important effect of Lord Curzon's policy was the dawn of the idea that India must have some definite political goal. In 1904, at the National Congress held at Bombay, Sir Henry Cotton, who presided, expressed the British radical view that India should evolve into a federation of free and separate states, the United States of India, each with its local autonomy, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing colonies, and all cemented together under the *aegis* of Great Britain. In 1905, Mr. Gokhale declared, while founding the Servants of India Society, that "Self-Government within the Empire" was India's goal. In his presidential address at Benares, he repeated that declaration; but the Congress itself did not, either in 1904 or 1905, adopt the goal. That important step was taken in 1906. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, who presided at the Calcutta Congress, declared in clear and unmistakable terms that "the whole matter can be comprised in one word, Self-Government or *Swaraj*, like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies."

Thus the magic word, *Swaraj*, was, for the first time, uttered in the Congress at a time when the public mind, aroused by important world-events and goaded and exasperated by a deep sense of national self-humiliation, was groping for some definite political ideal. That ideal was now clearly formulated, and the Congress embodied it in a resolution which declared that the the system of government, obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies, should be extended to India. The Calcutta Congress of 1906 is thus a landmark in the political development of India: it was in that Congress that she, for the first time in her long and chequered history, chose democratic self-government as her political ideal.

We have already said that a considerable majority in the Congress lost faith in the British responsiveness to Indian public opinion, and in the methods of moderate constitutional agitation hitherto followed. The veteran leaders of the Congress still cherished the old faith; but the younger and more ardent spirits, led by Mr. Tilak, Mr. Lajpat Rai, and Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, favoured some form of direct action. The differences between these two schools of thought became so acute that a rupture seemed imminent, and it looked as though the unity of the Congress would be broken. But the wise, patient, and experienced leadership of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji averted—though only for a short time—the split; and the Congress unanimously passed a resolution advocating a policy of industrial boycott and of national self-help and self-

reliance. The Extremists understood the policy of boycott in a much wider and deeper sense as not only including the boycott of British goods, but also extending to boycott of every form of association or co-operation with the Government. It is interesting to note that in these ideas of the Extremist Party are to be found the germs of the Non-co-operation movement which Mr. Gandhi started and elaborated in 1921.

But the attitude of the National Congress reflected only a part of the change that had come over the country. The new spirit or movement received fresh accession of strength from the repressive policy adopted by the Government, particularly in Eastern Bengal and the Punjab, and from the declaration made by Mr. Morley, the new liberal Secretary of State, that partition was a settled fact which would not be unsettled. By a natural process of reaction, the idea of national independence began to dawn upon the younger minds, and the BANDE MATARAM, a nationalist daily, published in Calcutta, openly declared that if British rule was indifferent to the wishes of the people and did not care to promote their national self-realization, India would have nothing to do with that rule. The BANDE MATARAM was not a revolutionary organ ; it represented the academic school of national independence. But another paper, the SANDHYA, was frankly revolutionary, and proclaimed " We want complete independence. The country cannot prosper so long as the veriest shred of the Feringi's supremacy over it is left. *Swadeshi*, boycott, are all meaningless to us, if they are

not the means of retrieving our whole and complete independence."

Thus, outside the National Congress, the ideal of national independence began to be cherished by some people. This school of national independence contained two classes of people: those who believed that national independence could be won at an early date by methods of violence, terrorism, murder of officials, and those who believed that national independence was a natural 'moral' aspiration which could only be realized in the fulness of time by a steady process of inner growth and development,

The views of this academic school of National independence and the high idealism which inspired it are fully and clearly expressed in an article which the present writer contributed to the MODERN REVIEW in 1909. The reader will pardon him for making the following quotations therefrom :—

"Is not the Extremist movement, meaning thereby the movement for national freedom and greatness, as much a legitimate and natural consequence of Western influences as any other Indian progressive movement. Moderate or otherwise? Is not national freedom one of the very objects "we have taught the educated Indians to think desirable"?

"Materialism may deny it and agnosticism may question it, but to the eye of spiritual insight, there is no doubt whatever that human events are, in the final analysis, shaped by divine forces, and it is, in fact, one of these divine forces whose advent and operation we perceive in the resurgence of India and other Asiatic lands that is going on at present. The world goes on, on the principle of justice, and it cannot be that India or, for that matter, any other country is destined to remain sunk for ever in the

mire of subjection. India's close connection with England and, through her, with Western life and thought, however brought about in the first instance, can have no other meaning than this: *viz.*, to elevate India to the status of a free, progressive nation fully worthy to take her proper place in the comity of nations, and thus to make her a proper channel for the interchange and interaction of the two mighty currents of civilization, Eastern and Western. To read any other meaning into British rule in India is practically to deny Divine Existence and to posit a materialistic non-moral view of life.

"The Indian movement for freedom, for a full, worthy national life, is thus a Divine movement, and the might of the mightiest power in the world will have to confess itself impotent to destroy it by any measures of repression. It is as if a puny man were to wage war with God, and dare to expect victory against the All-powerful. What can be more futile and unwise than this?

"The Indian movement for freedom is an aspiration, a natural, holy and beneficent aspiration, and nothing, save the moral weakness of the Indian people themselves, can thwart or prevent its ultimate realization."

We have described this school of national independence as 'academic'; it might with equal truth be described as 'evolutionary'. It is based on, and derives its strength from, the theory that every country has an inherent right to independence; that without national independence, no people can evolve to their fullest possibilities and realize the best that is within them. India's right to regain her independence was recognised even by some English thinkers, notably by Goldwin Smith, in the days of the Mutiny of 1857. In 1907 when the clash of political ideals took place, even Mr. Gokhale, one of the greatest leaders of the Moderate,

or as it is now called, Liberal party, who was one of the best exponents of the ideal of colonial self-government, conceded India's right to independence. In an historic speech he made in that year, he declared that he knew no limitations to his country's aspirations, but that inasmuch as British rule was, on the whole, a beneficent and progressive force, he thought that to seek to sever connection with it was not only chimerical but unfair and unwise.

It is extremely difficult to trace the earliest beginnings of the revolutionary school of national independence. Its first clear and unmistakable manifestation took place in April 1908 when a bomb intended for a high European officer, killed two European ladies. This was followed by a series of other outrages; and the revelations made in connection with them all pointed to the rise of the revolutionary movement since the Partition of Bengal and its ramifications in many places in the country. In Bengal, the leader of this movement was Mr. Barindra Kumar Ghosh, a brother of the great scholar and ascetic-patriot, Mr. Aravinda Ghosh. The objects of this revolutionary movement are thus described in the report of a Committee, called the Sedition Committee, which was appointed by the Government in 1918 to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India:—

"We may safely conclude that the object of Barindra and his associates was to persuade the English-educated youths of Bengal that the British Government was founded on fraud and oppression, and that religion and history dictated

its removal. Ultimately, the British must be expelled from the country. In the meantime, by religious, athletic, educational discipline, a fanatical organisation must be created which would develop its inspiration by murders of officials, and finance and arm itself largely by the plunder of peaceable Indian folk, justified by the most cynical reasoning".

Some of the most widely circulated papers in Bengal belonged to this revolutionary movement. Sir Lawrence Jenkins, the Chief Justice of Bengal, described their character and teaching in these words:—

"They exhibit a burning hatred of the British race, they breathe revolution in every line, they point out how revolution is to be effected. No calumny and no artifice is left out which is likely to instil the people of the country with the same idea or to catch the impressionable mind of youth.

"The leaders of the revolutionary movement seem to have devised a well-considered plan for the mental training of their recruits. Not only did the Bhagavat Gita, the writings of Vivekananda, the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi supply them with mental pabulum, but they prepared special text-books containing distinctly revolutionary and inflammatory ideas. The most important of them, the MUKTI KON PATHE which means 'what is the path of salvation'? was a systematic treatise describing the measures which the revolutionaries should adopt in order to gain their ends. It condemned the low ideals of the National Congress, and while urging upon the young revolutionaries the desirability of joining the current agitations, exhorted them to do so with the ideal of freedom firmly implanted in their minds, as otherwise, real strength and training would never be acquired from them. It pointed out that it was not difficult to murder officials, that arms could be obtained by grim determination, that weapons could be prepared silently in secret places, and that young Indians could be sent to foreign countries to learn the art of

making weapons. It advocated and justified the collection of money from society by thefts, robberies and other forcible methods. Above all, it appealed to the revolutionaries to seek the assistance of the Indian Army. "Although these soldiers, for the sake of their stomach, accept service in the Government of the ruling powers, still they are nothing but men made of flesh and blood. They too know how to think; when, therefore, the revolutionaries explain to them the woes and miseries of the country, they, in proper time, will swell the ranks of the revolutionaries with arms and weapons given them by the ruling power ......Aid in the shape of arms may be secretly obtained by securing the help of the foreign ruling Powers."

It will be seen from the foregoing that, in 1905-6, when India was on the eve of taking another forward step on the path to *Swaraj* or self-Government, there were four strong currents of thought flowing in the country, viz., represented first by the old school of politicians whose faith in the time-honoured methods of constitutional agitation remained as firm as ever, and who wished to carry on the work on the old lines; secondly, by the Extremists in the National Congress who still believed in constitutional agitation, but aimed at making it more vigorous, assertive and effective by some form of direct action; thirdly, by those who advocated the ideal of national independence but sought to realize it, not by any methods of violence, but by the evolutionary process of making the people morally and spiritually fit for national independence; and fourthly, by the revolutionaries who believed that national independence could be regained by every method of physical force that it was possible to utilize.

We shall conclude this chapter with a brief reference to an interesting question, viz : What was the attitude of these two last classes of people with regard to self-Government as distinct from independence? Evidence on this question is very meagre, and it is not possible to answer it with any degree of certitude. But it seems, whereas the evolutionary school of national independence aimed at pursuing the two ends more or less simultaneously and on parallel lines, the revolutionary school of independence was utterly indifferent to the question, and sought, above all, to regain independence, whatever form of Government might ultimately be established, when once independence was obtained.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS.

I

The resignation of Lord Curzon and the succession of Lord Minto as Governor-General of India, in November 1905, were followed, in about a month after by the fall of the Conservative Government and the accession of the Liberals to power, with Sir Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister and Mr. John Morley as Secretary of State for India. The Liberals had a large majority, and there was also a fair sprinkling of 'Indians', as Mr. Morley calls them in his *Recollections*, that is, of members who took keen interest in the affairs of India and championed her cause. Mr. Morley does not tell us in his *Recollections* why, though he had his choice of many offices, he preferred the Secretaryship for India, whether his choice was due to his desire to undo the harm done by Lord Curzon, and introduce reforms in the system of Indian Government.

But whatever motives might have actuated him in choosing the India Office, whether it was the spell of Indian problems that fascinated him or whether it was his ambition to write a page in Imperial History, it was impossible for an able statesman of his principles and reforming spirit to fill any high office without leaving distinct impression upon it. As a

man of letters, particularly as the author of *Compromise* and of a monograph on Burke, his name had already been familiar to the Western-educated Indians who held him in high esteem, and some of whom drew inspiration from his noble teachings as a moral and political thinker. As regards the new Viceroy, though he did not profess the liberal creed, he was descended from the class of patrician Whigs; and we are told by Mr. Morley that he had his share of the intuitive political perception that belonged to that sect, since its rise at the revolutionary settlement. It is not possible to know when and how, or by what process of thinking, he first realized the necessity of reform; and his biographer, John Buchanan, unfortunately, throws no light on the question. It does not appear that Mr. Balfour's Conservative Government which chose him for the Viceroy's post gave him any mandate to introduce political reforms. It would, however, not be wide of the mark to infer that his sound judgment and good sense enabled him, soon after his arrival in India, to read aright the signs of the times, and that his sense of the need for reform was strengthened by the view openly expressed by the Prince of Wales, on his return from his Indian tour, that the one desideratum of the Indian system of administration was wider sympathy with the people, and also by the fervent appeal made by Mr. Gokhale for the conciliation of the educated classes. In the Budget debate in March 1906, Mr. Gokhale had given expression to these sentiments :—

"The question of the conciliation of the educated classes raises issues which will tax all the resources of British statesmanship. There is but one way in which this conciliation can be secured, and that is by associating these classes more and more with the Government of their country. This is the policy to which England stands committed by solemn pledges given in the past. What the country needs at the moment is a Government national in spirit, even though it may be foreign in personnel."

John Buchanan says in his biography of Lord Minto,that these words of the great Indian leader seemed to the Viceroy the bare truth, and that, soon after, he raised in private with some of his colleagues in the Executive Council the question of the desirability of appointing an Indian to its membership. Thus, not only the Liberal Secretary of State, but also the Conservative Viceroy, was in favour of taking some forward step in the direction of political advance, and reversing the policy of Lord Curzon in deliberately refusing to satisfy, even in the slightest degree, the political aspirations of the educated classes of India.

The accession of the Liberals to power and Mr. Morley's appointment as Indian Secretary were considered by the National Congress as favourable to the cause of political reform, and Mr. Gokhale went to England to press it on the sympathetic consideration of the new Government. Mr. Gokhale was indefatigable in the performance of his mission as India's ambassador; he addressed numerous meetings, had many interviews with members of Parliament and the Secretary of State, and did all he could to enlist the

sympathy of the British people in the cause of Indian political reform. He made a distinctly favourable impression upon Mr. Morley, and though it would be too much to say that the veteran statesman received from him his ideas of reform, or even his impulse to reform, there can be no doubt that he found his advice very valuable in judging the Indian situation and deciding the main lines of his policy.

That policy, in all its essential features, was clear and vivid, both as regards its objective and the methods to be pursued in achieving it. Mr. Morley with all his political idealism was no sentimentalist or doctrinaire politician; his political idealism did not go so far as to embrace the Oriental races. He had wide human sympathy will all races, whether Occidental or Oriental; he, however, did not believe that the political principles and ideals that were good for the Western races were also good for the Eastern. The view that democratic self-Government was not an exclusively, or even mainly, a Western ideal, but that it is a human ideal, essential to man's progress and development in the East, no less than in the West, and capable of being realized by all the civilized communities of the world, was at the time very rare even among the most advanced minds of Europe; and Mr. Morley, with all his vast knowledge of history and deep perception of the elements and conditions of human progress, did not share that view. He, therefore, did not appreciate the ideal of colonial self-Government which Mr. Gokhale and other Congress leaders had

placed before their countrymen; he compared it to the fur coat of Canada, and declared that it could never suit the actual conditions of Indian historical, cultural and psychological climate. He plainly told Mr. Gokhale that he considered it a mere dream, and, in a famous speech, described the aspiration for it as "crying for the moon". A thinker as he was, it does not seem to have occurred to him that the ideal might be good for India, and that, though she had hitherto been accustomed to personal rule, and was as yet far from realizing the full implications and all-pervading principles of self-Government, still, the trend of her evolution under the influence of British rule and Western education pointed to the ultimate realization by her of that ideal. His faith, however, in the spirit of Western political institutions was so transcendent that he held that the Government of India, in spite of its autocratic and personal character, ought to be informed by that spirit, and. further, that it could be so informed without radical changes in the machinery of Government.

Any large, far-reaching or radical changes in the system of Government in India were thus outside the scope of Mr. Morley's political philosophy or his actual scheme of reforms. His statesmanship, rooted though it was, so far as it went, in sound political principles, yet lacked world-wide breadth and liberalism. Though he strongly opposed Imperialism and disclaimed any trait thereof, he yet stood for the permanent maintenance of British supremacy in India. Nor was his states-

manship, in its practical working, quite wanting in the subtle element of astuteness. He saw that the Indian National Congress was every year growing in influence and power, and that it would be nothing less than folly to ignore or belittle it; he also saw that its ranks were divided, and that, therefore, its unity and strength might well be undermined by rallying the Moderates and cutting them off from the Extremists. While, therefore, he aimed, on the one hand, at conciliating the Moderates by moderate reforms, on the other hand, he gave full latitude to the Government of India to adopt measures of repression against the Extremists.

Another consideration that seems to have weighed with him in determining his general policy was the feeling that the Europeans, both Official and non-Official, "on the spot," were so powerful that unless care was taken to disarm their opposition, they might succeed in imperilling any scheme of reforms, however moderate and reasonable. In one of his letters to Lord Minto, he says :—

> "I am quite as much alive as you can be to the risk of going too fast for European sentiment in India. I do not forget the row about the Ilbert Bill, and I can see the elements of uneasiness that are roused, or may easily be roused, by the present trouble in Eastern Bengal and elsewhere. The fuss about the Fuller episode shows the easily excitable frame of mind of your Anglo-Indian community".

There seems to be no doubt that Mr. Morley was extremely anxious not to excite the opposition of the bureaucracy and the non-official Europeans to his

policy of reform, but to carry them with him in that policy. It is this anxiety that partly accounts for the moderation of his reforms and also for the declaration he made, soon after he assumed the reins of office, that the Partition of Bengal was a settled fact which he would not unsettle.

On June 15th, 1906, Mr. Morley set the ball of reform rolling by addressing the following important letter to Lord Minto :—

"I wonder whether we could now make a good start in the way of reform in the popular direction. If we don't, is it not certain that the demands will widen and extend into 'National' reasons, where I at least look with a very doubting and suspicious eye? Why should you not now consider as practical and immediate things—the extension of the native element in your Legislative Council; *ditto*, in Local Councils; full time for discussing the Budget in your L. C., instead of four or five skimpy hours; right of moving amendments, (of course, officials would remain a majority). If I read your letters correctly, you have no disposition whatever to look on such changes as these in a hostile spirit; quite the contrary. Why not, then, be getting ready to announce reforms of this sort? Either do you write me a despatch, or I'll write you one by way of opening the ball. It need be no long or high-flown affair; I suppose the notion of a native in your Executive Council would not do at all. Is that certain? I dare say it is, and it would frighten that nervous personage (naturally nervous) Anglo-Indian."

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his Government and a despatch embodying proposals of reform actually sent to the Secretary of State. On June 6, 1907, Mr. Morley, in his speech on presenting the Indian Budget, briefly described the nature of those proposals, and further informed the House of his intention to recommend to the Crown at least one Indian for appointment to the Council of India. This important step was actually taken on August 26, 1907. He recommended two Indians, one, a Hindu, and the other, a Mohammedan, and the recommendation was approved by His Majesty.

The correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Government of India on the Reform proposals went on for some time, and ultimately on 27th November, 1908, Lord Morley issued his famous despatch embodying the scheme of reforms as finally decided. A Bill was introduced in Parliament to give effect to these reforms, and it was passed with the support of all parties. On 15th November, 1909, the Government issued a resolution announcing that the Act was brought into force from that date and that the reformed Legislatures, both Provincial and Indian, would meet in January of the next year. Accordingly, on 25th January, 1910, Lord Minto opened and presided over the first reformed Indian Legislative Council constituted under the Indian Councils Act of 1909. In the course of his speech, the Viceroy said ;—

"The broadening of political representation has saved India from far greater troubles than those we have now to face. I am convinced that the enlargement of our ad-

ministrative machinery has enormously strengthened the hands of the Viceroy and the Government of India and has brought factors to our aid which would otherwise have had no sympathy with us. I believe above all that the fellow services of British and Indian administrators under a Supreme British Government is the key to the future political happiness of this country."

II

Before describing the changes introduced by the Morley-Minto Reforms, and considering the nature and extent of the constitutional advance they made, and their limitations, we shall turn for a while to the internal situation in India, as it existed during the period of four years when the reforms were on the anvil. Mr. Morley's emphatic declaration, that he would not reverse the Partition of Bengal, gave great offence, and the extremist movement received strength from this provocation given by a man from whom such an unsympathetic attitude had not at all been expected. In 1907, rioting took place in the Punjab, due, partly, to unwise handling by the Local Government of the Canal Colonies. The European community in the Punjab is always very nervous about the slightest trouble in that martial province, and they suspected that political agitators were tampering with the army and fomenting a rebellious spirit among Indian soldiers. On the recommendation of the Lieutenant-Governor, strong measures were sanctioned by Lord Minto's Government, and Lala Lajpat Rai, a highly respected, popular leader, and Mr. Ajit Singh were deported without trial under the

Regulation of 1818. An Ordinance was also issued prohibiting the holding of public meetings in the provinces of the Punjab and Eastern Bengal. These repressive measures, particularly the deportation of a leader, so good and true, as Lala Lajpat Rai, evoked such universal and strong feeling that even Mr. Gokhale cast aside his usual self-restraint, and made a vigorous protest against Lord Minto's action; he declared his firm conviction that Lala Lajpat Rai could never be guilty of such serious charges as were levelled against him and that the Government were betrayed into such high-handed action by unjustifiable suspicions and panic. All these events could not but give a fillip to the extremist movement.

The National Congress held its annual session in December 1907 at Surat, but the split between the Moderates and the Extremists which had been averted at Calcutta the previous year, now seemed inevitable. A strong impression had spread among the Extremist party that the Moderate leaders intended to go back on the decisions arrived at Calcutta, and in particular, to abandon the policy of boycott. The latter, for some unknown reasons, took no steps to remove this impression. The result was that the Extremists felt themselves justified in suspecting that the Moderates really contemplated a reactionary *coup d'etat* and in order to avert it, they decided to oppose the election, as President, of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose whom they regarded as a nominee of the Moderate leaders and a pliant instrument in their

hands, and to propose the election of one who, they hoped, would stoutly oppose and foil what they considered their sinister move.

In pursuance of this decision, Mr. Tilak went up on the platform to move his proposal, when confusion reigned supreme, and, in the end, the session of the Congress had to be suspended. The Congress was broken up; the Moderates and Extremists separated, not to meet again until eight years later, when a re-union was brought about between them, and the great National Assembly once again met in its former unity and strength at Lucknow in 1916 when new hopes and aspirations had been kindled by the great War.

On the next day after the break-up of the Congress at Surat, the Moderate leaders called a national convention of those delegates to the Congress who agreed, first, that the goal of India's political aspirations was the attainment of self-Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and participation by her in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with these members, and, secondly, that the advance towards the goal was to be by strictly constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and improving the condition of the masses of the people. About 900 delegates attended the convention, and the very first act of this new body was to

appoint a committee to draw up a constitution for the Indian National Congress. The committee met in April 1908, and the constitution which it framed, embodied the same political goal and the same method of attaining it, as were laid down by the Moderate leaders when they convened the convention.

The split at Surat was highly unfortunate and the moderate leaders do not seem to have given any serious thought to its far-reaching consequences. At this distance of time, one finds it extremely difficult to understand why they made no effort at all to meet Mr. Tilak and his followers half way and to bring about a compromise. It seems, they had a sub-conscious feeling that Mr. Tilak was, by temperament, so irreconcilable that a compromise was not possible or that even if it could be brought about, it was not desirable, as it would produce an unfavourable effect on Mr. Morley and Lord Minto, and jeopardise the chances of reform. Whatever that might be, they made a serious mistake in not doing all that lay in their power to avoid the split; for, one result of this breach in the Congress camp was that, with the Extremists driven away from the Congress and subsequently subjected to repression by the Government, the revolutionary movement was freed from all restraining influence and began to manifest itself in a series of violent outrages. That movement would not probably have reared its head, if the split at Surat had not taken place, causing helplessness and despair among the Extremist ranks and rendering it extremely difficult for

their activities to be carried on along constitutional and peaceful channels.

Within five months of the break-up of the Surat Congress, a bomb outrage, as we have already stated, was perpetrated at Muzaffarpur, the first indubitable manifestation of the activities of the Revolutionary Party. The Indian Press was naturally full of writings on this new portent in the political life of India. The Government, as usual, thought that the revolutionary spirit was fed by writings in the Extremist Press and instituted prosecutions against several papers throughout the country. As in 1897, their chief aim was to strike a severe blow at Mr. Tilak, the chief leader of the Extremist Party, the petrel of Indian politics, the arch-strategist whose sole policy was directed towards making moderate politics impossible and from whom the younger generations including the revolutionaries among them, were supposed to draw their inspiration. He was prosecuted for his articles on the bomb outrage at Muzaffarpur in his paper, the KESARI, and sentenced to six years' rigorous imprisonment which was subsequently commuted to simple detention in the prison at Mandalay. The conviction of Mr. Tilak was followed by serious disturbances at Bombay, for which the rioters were sentenced to very severe punishment. Mr. Tilak bore himself heroically in this trial; he conducted his own defence and did it in such a way as to strike the popular imagination and add to his already un-

equalled reputation as a popular leader. These Press prosecutions were followed by more stringent measures all aimed at the revolutionary and the extremist movement, and also at the Extremist Press which the Government regarded as the real source and fountain of all trouble and evil. Stern measures were also taken to put down the agitation against the Partition of Bengal which was still carried on by the Bengalees with remarkable perseverance and firmness of purpose. The weapon of deportation was again employed, and nine Bengali leaders were clapped into jail without trial or even without their being informed of the charges against them.

Thus, while the scheme of reforms was being considered and reconsidered between Whitehall and Simla, all the powerful weapons of an autocratic Government were employed with a high hand against the Extremist and the revolutionary movement. Mr. Morley's policy of rallying the Moderates was crowned with success; concerted action between the Moderates and the Extremists was prevented by the split at Surat; the great Extremist leader, Mr. Tilak, was removed from the scene; other lesser leaders of the Extremist Party were also deported or imprisoned. The Moderates had an open field all to themselves, and in the Congress that was held in 1908 at Madras under the new constitution framed by the Convention-Committee, while they only half-heartedly disapproved of the repressive measures adopted by the Government, even of the deportation of Bengalee leaders one

of whom at any rate was himself a Moderate with an unimpeachable character, and abandoned the policy of the boycott of British goods which had been adopted in 1906 as a protest against the partition of Bengal, they gave a warm and generous welcome to Morley-Minto reforms, eulogising them almost in extravagant terms as a large and liberal instalment of the reforms needed to give the people of this country a substantial share in the management of their affairs and to bring the administration into a closer touch with their wants and feelings. The very next year, however, they had to eat their words, and a resolution was adopted pointing out various defects in the scheme as finally passed. Mr. Surendranath Bannerji went so far as to say that the rules and regulations made by the Government had practically wrecked the Reform scheme as originally conceived. Thus it is that an astute Government plays fast and loose with moderatism. What wonder is there that extremism dies hard, and all the strong measures, which Lord Minto took to stamp it out and which the radical, philosophical Secretary of State connived at, with occasional pangs of conscience which at times he found too unbearable, were unable to put it down? On the very threshold of the inaguration of the reforms, another serious outrage took place ; Mr. Jackson, Collector of Nasik, was shot dead while attending a theatrical performance held in his honour, and as a result, several seditious conspiracies were brought to light. The ghost of anarchical violence continued to haunt the political life of India until it was laid to rest

many years later, not so much by the repressive measures of Government, as by a truly liberal policy of reform and by the persuasive action of a new philosophy of political conduct preached by a remarkable personality who wielded, for some years, an unbounded influence upon the people, unprecedented in the annals of modern India. The Moderates were rallied; the Extremists lived and throve in spite of repression. Mr. Morley's policy was only partially successful.

III

As we have already said, the political reforms introduced by Mr. Morley and Lord Minto were, by no means, radical or revolutionary; they embodied no new principle, nor were they designed to establish parliamentary or responsible Government in India. Mr. Morley, indeed, disclaimed any intention to introduce a Parliamentary system in India. In his speech in the House of Lords in December 1908, he said:—

"If I were attempting to set up a Parliamentary system in India, or if it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it. I do not wish in spite of the attempts in oriental countries at this moment, interesting attempts to which we all wish well, to set up some sort of Parliamentary system; it is no ambition of mine at all events to have any share in beginning that operation in India. If my existence, either officially or corporeally, were prolonged twenty times longer than either of them is likely to be, a Parliamentary system in India is not at all the goal to which I would for one moment aspire."

It was no object of the Secretary of State or the Viceroy to shift the centre of power, even slightly,

from the British democrary to the Indian people. Autocracy was still to be the essential feature of the system of Government; only, that autocracy was to be tempered, first, by a greater knowledge of Indian feelings and wishes, as expressed by leaders of moderate opinion who alone would find it possible to get themselves elected to the reformed legislatures under the many qualifications and restrictions prescribed by the rules, and, secondly, by some association of the Indian element in the exercise of that autocracy. The appointment of Indians as members of the several Executive Councils was no doubt an important step in fulfilment of the principles laid down in the Charter Act of 1833 and the Royal Proclamation of 1858, and it was highly appreciated by the educated classes as not only raising the status of the Indian people, but also opening out to them positions which would give them the highest executive training. The executive fellowship or partnership which was established by the Reforms, in however small a measure, was their best and most welcome feature; and, at a time when the highest post to which an Indian could aspire, was a judgeship of a High Court, this new opening to the ambitious of the educated classes naturally gave considerable satisfaction; but, it, in no way, modified the essential character of the system of Government itself. Moderate and safe Indians were admitted to the arcana of Government, though it is doubtful whether they enjoyed the fullest confidence of their European colleagues and of the heads of the various Governments. But the admis-

sion of a few select Indians to the *sanctum sanctorum* of Imperial Government did not, and could not, liberalise the administration itself in the popular direction.

Another important feature of the Morley-Minto Reforms was the enlargement of the Legislative Councils and statutory recognition of the principle of election. In Bengal, there was an elective majority; in other provinces, the majority was only non-official, that is, the elective members were in a minority and could carry their point only when the nominated non-official members voted with them, which they seldom did. The latter, with rare exceptions, were generally men who were not known for independence of judgment or spirit and deemed it their duty to side with the Government. The only result, therefore, of the enlargement of the Councils was to bring more men therein, and to enable the Government to know the views of different kinds of people on public questions. But though the Councils were enlarged, there was no direct election, and, except in the case of Mohammedans, the electorates were extremely narrow consisting only of a few delegates elected by members of Municipalities and District Local Boards.

In the Governor-General's Legislative Council, an official majority was strictly maintained. Lord Morley laid down as the basic principle of his reforms that the Imperial Council " in its legislative as well as its executive character should continue to be so constituted as to ensure its constant and uninterrupted power to fulfil the constitutional obligations that it

owes and must always owe to His Majesty's Government and to the Imperial Parliament". Apart from the representation of special interests and Mohammedans, so narrow was the basis of representation in the Council, that out of 27 elected members, 12 were elected only by the non-official members of the provincial legislatures.

The right of asking supplementary questions, of moving resolutions on matters of public interest and on the Budget, and of dividing on them, was another important feature of the reforms. But as there was no elective majority, except in the Bengal Provincial Council, the chances of carrying resolutions against the opposition of the Government were small. Nevertheless, the right was valuable in itself and its exercise gave considerable training to Indian members in performing some of the functions of a popular legislature.

Such were, in brief, the salient features of the constitutional reforms associated with the names of Lord Morley and Lord Minto. Their limitations were obvious, and owing to those limitations, they failed, in spite of the high expectations formed of them by Mr. Gokhale and other leaders, to satisfy the legitimate aspirations even of the moderates. They did not transfer even the smallest measure of responsibility to the Indian people ; they created no electorates, except in the case of the Mohammedans, and gave no political training to the masses. By a cleverly devised system of restrictions and disqualifications, they excluded

the extremists from the new Councils with the result that a large and growing party found no representation whatever. When an extremist like Mr. Kelkar, a close associate and follower of Mr. Tilak, sought election, the Bombay Government disqualified him under council regulations by declaring that he was of "such antecedents and reputation that his election would be contrary to public interest." And, in general, the election by members of Municipalities and District Local Boards who were the primary voters in non-Mohammedan general constituencies, of delegates entitled to vote at Council-elections, was so manipulated that the Extremists found no place in the delegation. The times might not have been ripe for the introduction of even a small measure of responsibility; but the non-creation of electorates based on a fairly wide franchise was the greatest defect of the reforms. Their essential nature might be briefly described by saying that they created small consultative oligarchies of moderate views, from whose criticisms the various Governments found useful in deciding their lines of policy, and in adopting legislative or administrative measures.

But in spite of these limitations, they played an important part in the political development of India and in the evolution of her polity. It is easy to criticize them and point out their defects particularly in the light of subsequent reforms; but, there can be no doubt, they gave Indians much valuable training without which they would not have been able to make the best use of the legislatures as subsequently expanded and reform-

ed in 1921. Lord Morley disclaimed any desire to set up a parliamentary system of Government in India; such disclaimer might have been necessary to disarm opposition to his scheme of reform; he might have lacked faith in the suitability of Western political institutions to Eastern modes of thought and life, and might have expressed that lack of faith with an assurance that was not based upon a wide view of the far-reaching operation of modern world forces and which did scant justice to the very forces set in motion in India by Western education and Western ideas; and yet from a broad evolutionary point of view, the Morley-Minto reforms were a necessary and useful stage on India's advance towards self-Government and they made possible her political development up to a point when England found herself inevitably confronted with the problem of what was to be the goal of her policy in India and by what methods that goal should be reached. The names of Lord Morley and Lord Minto will ever remain memorable in the annals of modern India, as of those whose reforms prepared the soil for transplanting the root of democratic responsible Government.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WAR AND THE GREAT DECLARATION

I

WITHIN five years from the inauguration of the Morley-Minto reforms, the world was convulsed by one of the most horrible and devastating wars the human race has witnessed. In India, as elsewhere, it led to momentous changes. In the meanwhile, the blended policy of conciliation and repression—conciliating the Moderates and repressing the Extremists—which Lord Morley and Lord Minto had pursued, was continued by the Marquis of Crewe and Lord Hardinge who succeeded them respectively. The platform had already been brought under executive control; the suppression of newspapers and presses, in case they were used as instruments of promoting violence, had also been legalised. These measures, however, had been deemed inadequate to cope with the Extremist and revolutionary movements. A general control of the Press was considered necessary; the old view expressed by Sir Thomas Munro that India was not ripe for freedom of the Press and that the system of Government in the country was imcompatible with such freedom was raked up, and such was the irony of events that the very first session of the reformed Imperial Legislative Council witnessed the enactment of a measure which deprived the Indian people of a right

which they had enjoyed for many years and highly valued. The extremely comprehensive and stringent character of the new Press Act passed in 1910 will be seen from the following remarks made by Sir Lawrence Jenkins, Chief Justice of Bengal, in a case that came up before him :—

"The provisions of Section 4 (of the Act) are very comprehensive and its language is as wide as human ingenuity could make it. Indeed, it appears to me to embrace the whole range of varying degrees of assurance from certainty on the one side to the very limits of impossibility on the other. It is difficult to see to what lengths the operation of this section might not be plausibly extended by an ingenious mind. They would certainly extend to writings that may even command approval. An attack on that degraded section of the public which lives on the misery and shame of others would come within this widespread net; the praise of a class might not be free from risks. Much that is regarded as standard literature might undoubtedly be caught."

These measures, however, failed to achieve their avowed purpose. The revolutionaries carried on their violent activities as before ; and even Lord Minto and and Lord Hardinge did not escape their malignant attention. The Extremists, though overawed, harrassed and deprived of their leaders, nursed their feelings in silence ; and their faith in their own movement and methods of work grew from more to more. Every measure of repression to which the Government resorted, they considered as a vindication of their attitude and policy. The Press Act added to the weapons of their armoury ; and they pointed to it as a fresh justification of their position that the British Government were

stolidly indifferent to Indian public opinion, and ruled the country, not with the consent of the governed, but by sheer force. The Act added to the long list of their indictments against British rule and swelled the rising tide of anti-British feeling. It placed the Moderates in a very awkward position; while fully recognising the abuses of the Press and the necessity of putting them down in a proper and legitimate manner, by recourse to the ordinary law of the land, they could not be blind to the fact that the Act was a terrible weapon in the hands of the Executive; and they, too, condemned it and urged its repeal.

The year 1912 was memorable for the Royal visit and for the grand Durbar held at Delhi for the purpose of proclaiming His Majesty's accession to the throne. Whoever may have first conceived the idea of the King-Emperor visiting India—whether His Majesty himself, the Cabinet or the Viceroy conceived it—it was a happy idea, and its fulfilment resulted in the process of conciliation being carried a stage further. The mere fact that it was the first visit of a British Sovereign to India, ever since, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, she came under British rule, stirred the imagination of the people, particularly of those sections of the vast population, whose conception of kingship was still Oriental, and who did not know the real constitutional position of the British Sovereign. Many of them, with a sense of the superstitious, considered it a happy augury, as presaging the ultimate coming of the day when their sovereign, though alien in race, lan-

guage and religion, would live in their midst, sharing their joys and sufferings, and taking a lively interest in all the intimate concerns of their lives, like the paternal monarchs of the ancient past. The general feeling of satisfaction which the visit of the King-Emperor George V evoked was increased by the numerous proofs His Majesty gave of his simplicity and graciousness of manner, and of his kindliness of spirit, and still more by the announcement—as unexpected as it was gratifying—that the Government had decided to unsettle the "settled fact" of the Partition of Bengal, and that the Bengali-speaking province which had been rent in twain by the ruthless hand of Lord Curzon would be restored to its former unity. The modification of the partition was hailed as an act of statesman-like wisdom, and though the Government protested that in thus reversing an unpopular measure, they had not yielded to the pressure of agitation, all classes of people and, above all, the Extremists rejoiced that their vigorous agitation and their sufferings had, after all, not gone in vain, that they had been justified by the achievement of a concrete result which they had devoutly wished for.

It has been already stated that while seeking to conciliate the Moderate Party by his policy of reform, Lord Morley had set his face unflinchingly against the ideal of colonial self-Government. In this respect also, Lord Crewe followed closely in the footsteps of his predecessor. In the Despatch which the Government of India has sent to the Secretary of State proposing

the modification of the Partition of Bengal and the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi, they had used language which had been interpreted by some people as foreshadowing the gradual evolution of Home rule, or self-Government. Referring to this interpretation, Lord Crewe said as follows in the House of Lords in June 1912:—

> "There is a certain section in India which looks forward to a measure of self-Government approaching that which had been granted in the Dominions. I see no future for India on these lines. The experiment of extending a measure of self-Government practically free from Parliamentary control to a race which is not our own, even though that race enjoys the services of the best men belonging to our race, is one which cannot be tried. It is my duty as Secretary of State to repudiate the idea that the Despatch implies anything of the kind as the hope or goal of the policy of Government."

By this repeated repudiation of the ideal of self-Government, the Government hoped that the Moderate Party would be persuaded to abandon it and be content with small instalments of reform, on the lines of those recently introduced. On this vital question, however, the Moderates showed adamantine firmness. Mr. Gokhale reaffirmed the ideal as frequently and as vigorously as it was repudiated by responsible British statesmen; and indeed the demand for a declaration that the goal of British policy in India was the realisation of self-Government such as obtained in Canada, Australia or South Africa, began to take concrete shape and become more and more articulate and insistent. Great Britain must solemnly pledge herself to this goal and work earnestly for its attainment; otherwise, her rule in

India will cease to have any moral purpose and justification—this sentiment found more and more expression in the Indian Press and in the utterances of responsible Indian publicists. The following extracts from an article which the present writer contributed to the MODERN REVIEW in May 1912, on the Royal visit and its good effects, fully express the growing feeling on the subject :—

"About a century has passed since the inscrutable dispensation of Providence brought us under British Rule. That rule has given us a peaceful, well-ordered government and a highly organised and efficient system of administration. Above all, it has opened to us the rich treasures of Western thought and culture, and brought us in close touch with all that is noble and great in European civilization. It has been a mighty progressive force influencing every department and side of our national existence. The result is that it has produced in us an irrepressible aspiration for bettering our condition, social, moral, material, and political, and for the attainment of a position worthy of a civilized and self-respecting nation. This desire for progress embraces every sphere of national life and has been manifesting itself, on the one hand, in improved family and social life, and on the other, by means of various organisations, social, political, religious, industrial and so forth, the number of which, as has been well said by a writer, is 'amazing.' These organizations have one and the same ultimate common purpose, viz., to make India a self-governing, powerful, progressive, efficient nation, though their actual spheres of work are different. The aspiration for self-Government is thus not a mere political ambition (though that in itself would not be objectionable) but a part and parcel of the general commendable desire for national elevation and self-realization. We want to raise ourselves all round, and to attain to a great and worthy position in the family of civilized nations, and we strongly

feel that this is impossible so long as we are not a self-governing nation, but continue to occupy a low political status, as at present.

"Let the Government realize this and remember that the Indian movement for self-government is a natural outcome of English education and other Western influences to which the country has now been subject for about a century. Let it also bear in mind that its ultimate success is assured by its inherent justice as much as by the general march of the world's evolution. The East is slowly but surely marching towards self-government, and it is inconceivable that while Japan has had a constitutional government for about two decades and the highly conservative China has entered on her career as a republic, India whose civilization is in no way inferior to that of China or Japan, will be content to remain in a state of perpetual political inferiority. The Government, therefore, would do well to recognise the justice of the movement, to place themselves at its head and to adopt measures for its ultimate fulfilment.

"The first thing that the Government must do in this direction is to make a clear and solemn declaration under the authority of the British Parliament, pledging themselves to the grant of self-government to India within a definite period of twenty or twenty-five years. No Indian has ever asked for the immediate introduction of a full-fledged system of self-government. Every reasonable man admits that some period must be allowed to elapse in making the necessary preparation, before the system is introduced. But we do maintain and insist that the Government owe it to the Indian people to make an immediate declaration in all solemnity that within some definite period not extending beyond twenty-five years, self-government will be given to India and that the interval will be spent in taking steps that may be necessary towards that end. Such a declaration will evoke the greatest enthusiasm for British rule among all classes of Indian subjects and forge the bonds of permanent union and friendship between England and India."

Though responsible British statesmen were disparaging and repudiating this ideal of colonial self-Government, it is interesting to note that, in England, a new school of political thought was rising which began to realize that events were inevitably moving towards that goal. In an article on 'India and the Empire' published in the ROUND TABLE for September 1912, the very first number published after Lord Crewe's speech referred to above, appears the following :—

> "To talk about colonial self-Government in India is, no doubt, to look far ahead. It does not fall within the field of practical politics. But it is well that those outside India, who are ultimately responsible for its government, yet who only occasionally have time to glance at its affairs, should see where things are moving. For whether the pace be fast or slow, that is the goal towards which events in India, propelled by Indian and British alike, are travelling. To dam the tide would raise a flood which would overwhelm not only our rule but India herself in a torrent of desolation. To roll it back would be to burden ourselves for all time with the responsibility for the daily welfare of three hundred million souls."

Mr. Gokhale, with that constructive statesmanship which was his supreme gift, while never losing sight of the ideal and always insisting on it on suitable occasions, fully realized the necessity of building up the Indian nation by constructive work in every sphere of national life. He saw that the greatest barrier to India's progress was the terrible illiteracy of the masses of people. India presented the spectacle of a small but

growing class of men who were highly educated, and of the vast masses of people steeped in ignorance, and suffering from all the evils born of ignorance. All the great Modern Powers of the world, including the Land of the Rising Sun, had attained world-wide influence and their high level of eminence by general diffusion of education among the lowest and the humblest, and thereby raising the average intellectual, social and political level of the entire nation. The real difference between the advanced countries of the West and the comparatively backward countries of the East lay in the difference between the average level of the masses in the two sets of countries. Mr. Gokhale and other Moderate leaders realized this keenly, and, therefore, the introduction of compulsory primary education was one of the most pressing tasks to which they bent their energies. Mr. Gokhale introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council a Bill providing for the introduction of compulsory education. If Government had possessed a modicum of imagination, and been inspired by a definite ideal and purpose, they would have heartily supported the measure; but, as it was, they opposed it, and as the official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council had been scrupulously maintained in the new reformed constitution, the Bill was thrown out. Again, the Extremists felt themselves justified in their movement; they maintained still more stoutly that the reforms were illusory, that England did not really mean to promote the national self-realisation of India.

The upshot was that the Morley-Minto reforms failed to produce real and lasting improvement in the relations between the rulers and the ruled, and, though the Extremists bent low under the heavy weight of repression, event after event took place justifying their position and strengthening their faith that so long as India was not the arbiter of her own destiny, she could never achieve substantial progress.

II.

One of the immediate effects of the outbreak of the War upon the internal political situation of India was improvement in the attitude of the Government towards the Extremist Party. It was, of course, impossible to conciliate the revolutionaries who challenged British rule itself; on the contrary, as the War was likely to stimulate their anti-British activities and machinations, stringent measures were taken to put them down. But efforts were made to rally not only the Loyalists and the Moderates whose co-operation in the prosecution of the War the Government had no reason to doubt, but, if possible, also the Extremists who included a large proportion of the educated and the middle classes, whose growing influence had been proved by events, and who, if they thought of non-co-operation in the hour of the Empire's sorest need, would become a source of trouble and embarrassment to Government. The strategy of war demands that every effort should be made to impress the enemy with the strength of internal unity. Germany had counted on internal trouble in India; it was

necessary that she should be disillusioned, and made to realize that all India stood by Great Britain in fighting the war to a successful finish. Efforts were therefore made to relax the stringent measures hitherto adopted against the Extremists.

The release of Mr. Tilak in June 1914 immediately infused new life into the Extremist ranks, and led to the revival of their activities which had been almost paralysed ever since his incarceration. Six years of prison life, even at an advanced age, had not cowed down his indomitable spirit, or blunted the sharp edge of his patriotic fervour; and no sooner was he restored to liberty than he resumed his activities, and endeavoured to rally all his forces and to direct them anew to the promotion of the great cause of political freedom for which he had struggled and suffered. He assured the Government of his sincere support in the prosecution of the war, but refused to agree to suspension of political agitation; and in May 1915, he convened a conference of his party with the object of carrying on propaganda in favour of self-Government. The Government, however, no longer offered any serious opposition to these renewed activities of the Extremist Party.

The fervent appeal made by the Government for co-operation and assistance in the prosecution of the War met with the most splendid response from the princes and people of India. A tidal wave of loyalty swept over the land, and offers of assistance in men and money were

made by all classes of people. It would be impossible to over-estimate the services which India rendered to Great Britain in the victorious conduct of the War. The timely arrival of Indian troops on the Western front rolled back the tide of German advance which, otherwise, would have engulfed France in inevitable disaster. While the brave Indian troops were laying down their lives for the cause of Great Britain and her Allies, the educated classes also expressed their readiness to organise themselves into Volunteer corps, and do a bit of actual fighting, even though the military policy of the Government had denied them all training in the art of war and in the defence of their country. These offers, however, met with little sympathetic response from the Government, with the result that their ardour was damped, and, as the NATION, a weekly journal in London aptly put it, there was a lamentable waste of loyalty, owing to the unwillingness or inability of the Government to make use of all the enormous resources in men which the vast man-power of India could supply.

It may be stated that the attitude of the politically-minded classes with regard to the war was the outcome of mixed motives, in which both reason and sentiment played a part. Very few of them fully believed in the sincerity of the sentiments expressed by British statesmen as regards the character and objects of the War; they did not think that the war was going to end war; they knew that such sentiments were dictated by the exigencies of the tremendous conflict.

They believed that the war was the inevitable result of the Imperialist policy which every great Power had pursued, and that, therefore, as regards the rights and wrongs of the case, it was a question of degree, and not of absolute right on one side, and of absolute wrong on the other. A reasoned consideration of the whole situation led them to stand by the Government, and to give them every help, and they decided that they should take the declarations of British statesmen at their face value, and, when the time came, use them as additional arguments for pressing the claims of India to self-Government. Thus, if the noble sentiments of British statesmen were not uninfluenced by considerations of national self-interest, the determination of India's political leaders to stand by the Empire in its gravest crisis was, also, not free from such considerations. On both sides, national self-interest played an important part.

As the War ran its horrible course and as its speedy termination seemed doubtful, Indian political leaders were seized with impatience, and made an insistent demand for a declaration of policy which the Government intended to pursue after the War. Lord (then Sir) Sinha, in his address as President of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay in 1915, earnestly pleaded for a declaration that self-Government was to be the goal of British policy in India. Mr. Gokhale, who died prematurely in February 1915, amidst universal grief, had been asked by Lord Willingdon, the then Governor of Bombay, to draft a scheme of

reforms ; and the scheme he submitted, now regarded as his political testament, urged considerable liberalisation of the constitution, including provincial autonomy, though, it must be noted, his proposals of autonomy did not amount to full provincial responsible government. and the scheme itself was not based on the principle of direct election. In England also, in spite of the stress and pre-occupations of the War, political thinkers, such as those of the Round Table group, were engaged in considering the problem of the re-construction of the Empire, and of India's status therein, after the War. They rightly realized that it was impossible to stand still, and that the tremendous War-Force which had shaken Imperial and national life to its depths, made changes—far-reaching changes—inevitable. They concluded that the movement of political thought in India that had preceded the outbreak of the War, and received such an accession of strength therefrom, as well as the magnanimous attitude of the Indian princes and people towards the British Raj during the War, amply justified a new orientation of policy ; and they formulated a scheme of reforms based on the principle of dyarchy, directed towards the ultimate realization of responsible government, but evolving itself gradually by the steady process of practical working. In the spring of 1916, they drafted a memorandum, embodying their proposals, called the Duke Memorandum, so called after the name of its principal author, Sir William Duke, an ex-Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who held at the time the office

of Member of the Council of India. It is interesting to note that a copy of that memorandum was sent to Lord Chelmsford in 1916 on his assumption of office as Governor-General of India. The possession of the document by Lord Chelmsford was, however, kept such a profound secret that its existence was quite unknown until it was circulated to Provincial Governments for their views after the declaration of 20th August 1917. But such are the ways of the Government of India that they did not care to invite the views of the Indian National Congress or of the All-India Moslem League on the memorandum.

The Congress of 1915 amended its constitution so as to facilitate reunion with the Extremist Party. But since the Surat split, the Congress had become too inert for work among the masses; both Mrs. Besant and Mr. Tilak rightly felt that a new popular organisation was necessary to supplement the activities of the Congress and to carry on political propaganda among the masses. In 1916, each of them started a Home Rule League, and an intensive propaganda was carried on in favour of Home Rule. In one of his popular speeches, Mr. Tilak gave utterance to the sentiment "Home Rule is my birth-right, and I will have it"; and this slogan acted as a potent spell upon the minds of the people. In the Madras Presidency, Mrs. Besant conducted her campaign in favour of Home Rule with rare powers of organisation, with unique fervour and with marvellous tenacity of purpose. Her activities aroused the wrath of

Lord Pentland, the Governor of Madras, who ordered her internment as well as that of her two colleagues. This ill-considered and exasperating action of the Madras Government proved a blessing in disguise, since, its object of putting down the new vigorous political organisation started by Mrs. Besant proved an utter failure, and the cause of Home Rule gained fresh recruits from among all classes of people. Public meetings were held all over the country, and strong condemnation was expressed of the unstatesmanlike and vindictive policy of Lord Pentland. In the Bombay Presidency also, security proceedings were instituted against Mr. Tilak for speeches he made at a mass meeting; but the District Magistrate's order calling upon him to furnish security was quashed on appeal by the High Court.

When the Imperial Legislative Council met at Simla in September 1916, the elected members of the Council came to know that Lord Chelmsford had submitted proposals of reform to the British Government. Lord Chelmsford did not take his Council into confidence, and the secrecy he maintained was deeply resented. Nineteen elected members of the Council, including Mr. (now Right Honourable) Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Surendranath Bannarjee, Mr. Jinnah. and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah, submitted a memorandum embodying their views and proposals as to post-War reforms. The memorandum is an able and reasoned document and constitutes an important statement of the demands of the Indian people at

the time. After referring to the changed angle of vision brought about by the War and to the grievances and disabilities of the Indian people, it makes concrete proposals of reform. "What is wanted" it says, "is not merely good Government or efficient administration, but Government that is acceptable to the people, because it is responsible to them." Here, we find, perhaps for the first time, in a non-official document, the suggestion made that the Government should be responsible to the people of India. "This is," it goes on, "what India understands, would constitute the new angle of vision. If, after the termination of the War, the position of India practically remains what it was before, and there is no material change in it, it will undoubtedly cause bitter disappointment and great discontent in the country, and the beneficent effects of participation in common danger overcome by common effort will soon disappear, leaving no record behind, save the painful memory of unrealized expectations".

The continuous activities of the two Home Rule Leagues, the rumour that Lord Chelmsford had sent definite proposals of reform to the British Government, the fear that they might not be satisfactory, the timely action taken by the nineteen elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council in submitting their memorandum on post-War reforms—all this served to focus the attention of the people on the question of the policy which England should adopt towards India after the War. The Indian National Congress met at Lucknow

during Christmas of 1916. It was the first united Congress after the split of 1907; the number of delegates was very large and thoroughly representative of all communities and political parties. Thanks to the sagacity, the political wisdom and the spirit of compromise shown by Hindu and Mahomedan leaders alike, perfect understanding had been reached between the Hindu and Mahomedan communities as regards constitutional reforms, and both the Congress and the the All-India Moslem League adopted the same resolution. That resolution, first, expressed the opinion of the Congress and the League "that having regard to the fact that the great communities of India are the inheritors of ancient civilisations, and have shown great capacity for government and administration, and to the progress in education and public spirit made by them during a century of British Rule, and further, having regard to the fact that the present system of Government does not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people, and has become unsuited to existing conditions and requirements, the time has come when His Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date". It then went on to demand that a definite step should be taken towards self-government by granting the reforms contained in the joint scheme adopted by these two bodies, and that, in the reconstruction of the Empire, India should be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an

equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing Dominions.

The proceedings of the Lucknow Congress were marked by great enthusiasm; and satisfaction reigned supreme that a united demand had been formulated and presented to the Government in the name of the entire Indian Nation. The Moderates and the Extremists, the Hindus and the Moslems, and other minority communities, all had joined in urging that a proclamation should be issued promising self-government to India at an early date, and that, in the meanwhile, the reforms embodied in the joint scheme, introduced. High hopes were aroused that, in spite of the pre-occupations of the War, the Government would not turn a deaf ear to the united voice of the Indian people, and that a definite announcement of policy would soon be made. But the winter session of the Imperial Legislative Council went by, without any response being made by the Government. The attitude shown by the Government aroused discontent; the people began to lose patience; and the cry for some strong action that would be effective was raised. The younger and more ardent spirits began to think and speak of passive resistance, and the Congress Committees were indignant at the callous indifference shown by the Government to the persistent demand for a declaration of policy. At last, the British Government realised that any further delay in formulating and announcing the policy to be pursued after the War would aggravate the situation, embittering feelings still more and

giving fillip to counsels of despair. The Mesopotamian muddle which was a serious commentary upon the vaunted efficiency of the Indian Government led to the resignation of Mr. (now Sir) Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, and Mr. Montagu who succeeded him, made, on behalf of the British Government, the following declaration of policy in the House of Commons on 20th August, 1917:—

"The policy of His Majesty's Government with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible. * * *

The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence could be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

The declaration did not give entire satisfaction to any school of political thought, but it came not a moment too soon, and produced considerable pacifying effect. Its outstanding merit is its recognition of India's claim to the ultimate realization of responsible Government. The whole declaration is very ably and cautiously worded; it bears the impress of the most deliberate thought and consideration; every word seems to have been most carefully weighed before it

was used. ' The ideal of responsible government is set forth ; but its formulation is made rather incidentally, and not in that prominent manner which its importance deserves. This lack of prominent mention of the goal of responsible government will be seen in greater relief, if we compare the declaration, and the preamble of the Government of India Act, 1919, in which it was subsequently embodied, with the preamble of the Autonomy Act passed just a year before, by the United States of America, conferring autonomy on the Phillipine Islands. The latter says " Whereas it is, as it has always been, the purpose of the people of the United States to withdraw their sovereignty over the Phillipine Islands and to recognise their independence as soon as a stable government can be established therein." No such prominence marks the manner in which the goal of Great Britain's policy in India, *viz.*, responsible government, is set forth in the declaration. But whatever objections may justly be taken to the declaration both as regards its substance and its form, there can be no doubt that it is a momentous announcement, opening a new chapter in the political development of India. By that declaration, the British Government, on behalf of the British people, have given a solemn and sacred promise that India will be raised to the status of a self-governing nation, that, henceforth, the people of India will be enabled to manage their own national affairs in an increasing measure, so that ultimately she will cease to be a subject nation, and become, in the words of the con-

stitution of the Irish Free State, a co-equal member of the Community of Nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations. For the first time in the history of British rule, the object of Great Britain's policy was authoritatively and clearly defined to be Responsible Government. India is set on the path of democratic self-Government, and when we remember that such democratic self-Government has never been known in the long and chequered annals of India, it is impossible to exaggerate the momentous character of the pronouncement, or the deep and far-reaching social effects which a polity, based on, and seeking to realize, it, may increasingly produce. It is, in fact, a revolutionary pronouncement; and when the ideal of responsible Government with all its implications is fully realized in the national thought and life of the Indian people, their whole national character and social life will have undergone a radical transformation. The more thinking of the Indian leaders did not fail to be deeply impressed by this profound and far-reaching significance of the declaration; and, instead of finding fault with its defects, they wisely applied themselves to the immediate task of urging substantial reforms in the direction of responsible Government. With the announcement of August 20, 1917, Modern India has entered on a new era in her history.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HAND OF THE MYSTERIOUS.

I.

THOUGH the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, as introduced by the Government of India Act, 1919, failed to satisfy the Indian people, their general attitude towards them in the early months of 1920 was not one of positive hostility; nor did it indicate, on the part of political leaders, any desire to have nothing to do with them and to boycott the reformed Councils. The Moderates, in their conference held at Calcutta in 1919, cordially welcomed the Reforms Act as the first definite and substantial step towards the progressive realization of responsible government, and earnestly appealed "to all sections of the community, European and Indian, officials and non-officials, whole-heartedly to co-operate for the successful working of the Act." They stood for ungrudging and whole-hearted co-operation, believing that, in spite of the defects of the Act, the sound policy, in the true interests of India, was that of co-operation in working it as successfully as possible. The National Congress, though its attitude was not so friendly, also resolved to work the reforms so as to secure early establishment of full responsible government. The following resolution adopted by it is a clear and faith-

ful reflection of the spirit and temper of the prepond-erant section of Indian opinion with regard to the reforms :—

(*a*) This Congress reiterates its declaration of last year that India is fit for full responsible government, and repudiates all assumptions and assertions to the contrary whenever made.

(*b*) This Congress adheres to the resolution passed at Delhi Congress regarding constitutional reforms, and is of opinion that the Reforms Act is inadequate, unsatis-factory and disappointing.

(*c*) This Congress further urges that Parliament should take early steps to establish full responsible govern-ment in India in accordance with the principle of self-determination.

(*d*) Pending such introduction, this Congress trust that, so far as may be possible, they so work the reforms as to secure an early establishment of responsible government, and this Congress offer thanks to the Rt. Hon. Mr. E. S. Montagu for his labours in connection with the Reforms.

Mr. Gandhi who, a few months later, launched the Non-co-operation movement which included the boycott of the reformed Councils, was also, at the Amritsar Congress, in favour of working the Reforms in a spirit of co-operation. In an article under the heading "The Congress" published in his paper "Young India," on 7th January 1920, he wrote :—

"It was because I did not consider and do not consider the Reforms to be an evil or unjust, and because I consider them to be a progressive step towards responsible Government that I decline to consider them to be dis-appointing ········ The Royal Proclamation has been framed in a most liberal spirit. It is full of good will and it would have been wrong on the part of the Congress not to have responded to the King's call for co-operation. My

faith in human nature is irrepressible, and even under the circumstances of a most adverse character, I have found Englishmen amenable to reason and persuasion, and as they always wish to appear to be just even when they are in reality unjust, it is easier to shame them than others into doing the right thing. Be that, however, as it may, it would be a fall from our culture, and it would be unwise not to grasp the hand of fellowship extended through the Proclamation. If we are strong, we shall lose nothing by beginning with co-operation. We at once place the bureaucracy in the wrong by our readiness to co-operate for the common purpose."

Mr. Tilak, who always fixed his eyes on the goal, declared that he would accept what had been given, agitate and work for more, and use it for obtaining more as soon as possible. His policy of responsive co-operation included both co-operation, and constitutional assertion, and if need be, constitutional obstruction. The moderate policy of co-operation, rightly understood, did not also rule out constitutional obstruction; the difference only was on what aspect of the matter more emphasis was laid.

Mr. Tilak's attitude was further shown by the policy and programme of the Congress Democratic Party which he formed soon after the Amritsar Congress. He now directed his efforts towards the organisation of this party, putting up candidates on its behalf for elections to the legislatures, and securing, as far as possible, a majority of its members in each legislature. He was in favour of the acceptance of ministerial offices, and looked forward to Congress Democratic ministries functioning in many, if not all, legislative councils. He believed that such ministries

would be composed of the ablest, most patriotic and independent men who, with the strength behind them in the Councils and in the country, would be able to carry through popular policies, and who, by their measures and general spirit of independence and self-assertion, would effectively expose the inherent defects and limitations of the dyarchical system, and make speedy further advance inevitable. The manifesto of the Party which he issued in April 1920, deserves to be recorded in full, as reflecting the general attitude of the people towards the Reforms at the time, and constituting the first notable and serious effort made at party formation by a great national leader. It says :—

"The Congress-Democratic Party, as the name denotes, is a party animated by feelings of unswerving loyalty to the Congress and faith in Democracy. It believes in the potency of democratic doctrines for the solution of Indian problems, and regards the extension of education and political franchise as two of its best weapons. It advocates the removal of all civic, secular, or social disabilities based on caste or custom. It believes in religious toleration, the sacredness of one's religion to oneself and the right and duty of the State to protect it against aggression. This party supports the claim of the Mahomedans for the solution of the Khalifat question according to Mahomedan dogmas and beliefs and the tenets of the Koran.

"This party believes in the integration or federation of India in the British Commonwealth for the advancement of the cause of humanity and the brotherhood of mankind but demands autonomy for India, and equal status as a sister-state with every partner in the British Commonwealth including Great Britian. It insists upon equal citizenship for Indians throughout the Commonwealth and effective retaliation whenever it is denied. It welcomes the League

of Nations as an instrument for enforcing the peace of the world, integrity of States, freedom and honour of nations and nationalities, and for ending the exploitation of one country by another.

"This party emphatically asserts the fitness of India for Representative and Responsible Government and claims for the people of India, on the principle of self-determition, the exclusive right of fashioning the form of government and determining the most appropriate Constitution for India. It regards the Montagu Reform Act as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing" and will strive to remedy the defect by introducing, with the aid of the members of the Labour party and other sympathisers in British Parliament, at the earliest opportunity, a New Reform Bill for establishing full Responsible Government in India, including full military control and full fiscal freedom, and an exhaustive declaration of rights with constitutional guarantees. To achieve this object, it contemplates and recommends a resolute and energetic campaign in India and in the countries represented on the League of Nations. In this matter, the party's watchword will be "Educate, Agitate and Organise."

"This party proposes to work the Montagu Reform Act for all it is worth and for accelerating the grant of full responsible government, and, for this purpose, it will, without hesitation, offer co-operation or resort to constitutional opposition, whichever may be expedient and best calculated to give effect to the popular will".

Apart from the foregoing aims and principles, the party platform will contain the following planks but it does not profess to be exhaustive.

IMPERIAL

1. Repeal of all repressive legislation, *e.g.*, (Rowlatt Act, the Press Act, the Arms Act etc.); the introduction of trial by jury of one's own countrymen especially in cases of offences against the State; the abolition of rigorous imprisonment for such offences, and jail reform with a view

to placing offenders of all classes on a par with similar offenders in Great Britain.

2, Securing for the labouring classes, agricultural and industrial, a fair share of the fruits of labour, a minimum wage, relationship between capital and labour on equitable basis, and promoting organisations suitable for the purpose.

3. Control of the export of foodstuffs and other necessaries of life by tariff or by other methods with a view to reducing the prices thereof and conserving supplies.

4. Promotion of Swadeshism and development of industries by all recognised methods including State subsidies and protective tariff.

5. Nationalisation of railways and regulation of railway tariffs by legislation with a view to assist industrial development and to abolish privileges and favouritism in their working.

6. Retrenchment first and foremost in every department, especially in the Military expenditure, and taxation, when imperative or desirable, but taxation graduated according to the capacity of various classes, corporations or individuals, so that the burden may be proportionate to the means or wealth of the tax-payers.

7. Creation of a citizen Army, officered by Indians, naval, aireal and military education; Commissions for Indians in all military services without racial discrimination.

8. Recruitment of all services by open competitive examinations in India.

9. Promotion of national unity by such means as the establishment of a *lingua franca* for all India, betterment of relations between followers of different religions, and especially a Hindu-Moslem Entente.

10. Readjustment of provinces on linguistic basis.

PROVINCIAL

1. Immediately securing full popular autonomy for the provinces.

2. Permanent Rayatwari settlement on the basis of an equitable assessment.

3. Village control over reserved and protected forests in regard to pasturage, fuel, dealwood, and use of minor products.

4. Absolute prohibition of Veth, Bigar and Sarbarai.

5. Education through the vernaculars as high as possible.

6. Free and compulsory education without distinction of sex, special contributions and increased grants-in-aid from state funds to Municipalities and Local Boards to carry out this object immediately.

7. Restoration of Village Panchayats with administrative and judicial powers.

8. Abolition of drink.

9. Extension of the franchise without sex distinction.

10. Sanitation upon a systematic basis under a Minister of Health.

11. Carrying out of departmental reforms already enunciated and approved by popular opinion; e. g. Agricultural development, extension of irrigation, the co-operative movement, Industrial and Technical Education suitable to the needs of the country—organised medical relief, and encouragement to indigenous systems of medicine.

"Upon this programme, the party appeals for votes and support for candidates pledged to these principles with the fullest confidence of receiving an enthusiastic response so as to ensure victories in the coming election battles."

Such was the general attitude towards the Reforms in the early months of 1920. Soon after, Mr. Gandhi started the Non-co-operation movement and in September 1920, the National Congress at a special session adopted his Non-co-operation programme and decided to boycott the reformed Councils. What

was it that led to this sudden and prodigious change in public feeling and attitude?

II.

To understand it, it is necessary to go back and to trace the course of certain unfortunate events that took place, while the reforms were being adumbrated, and forged on the legislative anvil. On 10th December, 1917, the Government of India, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, appointed a Committee, presided over by Justice Rowlatt, to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement which had naturally been a source of poignant anxiety to the authorities. It would seem strange that the question, *viz.*, what measures should be adopted to put down the revolutionary movement, should have engaged the attention of the Government just at the very time when they were seriously considering the question of constitutional reforms. But it was the same blended policy of conciliation and repression which had been pursued by Lord Morley and Lord Minto; only this time, the object of repression was not political extremism, but the revolutionary movement. British statesmanship has two sides; it divides political movements into two broad categories, those to be conciliated, and those to be put down with stern repression. Both these policies, it considers complementary and mutually helpful; conciliation is deemed necessary for repression, and repression for conciliation. If the heavy hand of repression is not allowed to strike those elements or movements which

it seeks to put down, the policy of conciliation will, it is feared, meet with failure; on the other hand, some measure of conciliation is sought in order to ensure the success of the policy of repression. British statesmanship feels no qualms of conscience, no intellectual doubts, no moral hesitancy, if occasions of rejoicing are marred by exhibitions of repression. This is how it advances on the path of steady and firm progress, without weakening the foundations of peace and order.

In accordance with this irrepressible characteristic of British statesmanship, Lord Chelmsford's Government wished to provide for some effective measures to meet the revolutionary movement which, though never wide-spread or powerful, used at times to make itself felt by the assassination of officials and other acts of terrorism. With that object in view, they succeeded in obtaining the sanction of Mr. Montagu, while he was in India, for the appointment of the Rowlatt Committee. Mr. Montagu seems to have followed in this the example of his political *Guru*; just as Lord Morley sought to disarm official opposition to his reforms by sanctioning measures of repression such as the Press Act proposed by the Government of India, so also, Mr. Montagu probably thought that his scheme of reforms would have an easier way with the Indian bureaucracy, if he gave them a free hand in stamping out the revolutionary movement. The Rowlatt Committee recommended drastic changes in the ordinary penal

law, so as to invest the Government permanently with exceptional powers such as those enjoyed under special war legislation. In order to give effect to these recommendations, the Government introduced two Bills, popularly called the Rowlatt Bills, in the Indian Legislative Council, in February 1919. Indian opinion feared that these powers might be easily abused by the executive, and directed not only against real revolutionaries, but also against honest patriotic political workers who might be *bete noire* with the Government, and whom they might wrongly, on the strength of unscrupulous Police reports, suspect of harbouring anti-British designs. India is a land of mutual suspicions, both on the part of the Government and the people; though. within recent years, there has been considerable improvement in the *morale* of the Police, and in their conception of their duties, as public servants and guardians of law and order, yet in pre-reform days, they were extemely unpopular and enjoyed an evil reputation for general unscrupulosity of aims and methods; the influence they exercised on the Executive was excessive, and the latter did not show any fine sense of discrimination between legitimate and illegitimate political agitation. Any attempt arm the Executive with increase naturally viewed by political greatest disfavour and rouses the an outrage upon the already lim people. In this, is to be found the

unprecedented opposition to the Rowlatt Bills, which rose to a climax when the Government, out of a sheer desire to show that they would not yield to popular agitation, refused to accept even a moderate amendment for their postponement till the September session of the Legislative Council, moved by a highly respected, sober, liberal leader, Sir (then Mr.) Surendranath Banerjee. Mr. Gandhi, who is always very keenly alive to any attack on individual rights and personal liberty, started the *Satyagraha* movement, placed himself at the head of the agitation against the Bills, and exhorted the people to take the following pledge regarding them:

Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bill known as the Criminal Law Amendment Bill No. 1 of 1919 and the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Bill No. 2 of 1919 are unjust, subversive of all the principles of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual on which the safety of India as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that, in the struggle, we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property."

One of the Bills was finally passed on 17th March 1919; and the stolid, studied contempt which the Government showed for Indian opinion, however united and strong, made the people realize, more keenly than ever, their humiliating national position.

Mr. Gandhi issued a manifesto exhorting the people to observe a *Hartal* on the 6th of April 1919,

that is, to observe it as a day of mourning on which no business was to be transacted, by way of a popular demonstration against the high-handed, defiant action of the Government in enacting the Rowlatt Bill. At Delhi, a *Hartal* was observed on 30th March, and some trouble had already broken out in the Imperial City on that day. Feeling against the Government ran very high; and Swami Shraddhananda, thinking that the presence of Mr. Gandhi might have a pacifying effect and avert any fresh trouble, gave him an invitation to visit Delhi, and a similar invitation to visit Amritsar was also given him by Dr. Satyapal. In compliance with these requests, Mr. Gandhi left Bombay for Delhi on 8th April. The authorities at Delhi and Lahore took quite a contrary view to that of Swami Shraddhananda, of the probable effects of Mr. Gandhi's presence upon the already excited passions of the people; they thought that, instead of producing a pacifying effect, it will only serve to arouse their passions all the more. They, therefore, with the approval of the Government of India, served him with orders prohibiting him from entering the provinces of Delhi and the Punjaub. Mr. Gandhi disobeyed the orders with the result that he was arrested and sent back to Bombay where he was at once set at liberty.

The news of Mr. Gandhi's arrest spread like wild-fire throughout the length and breadth of India. At Ahmedabad, where he lived and worked, the mob committed some of the worst excesses, to which mob-psychology could drive it in a state of passion and

excitement. At Amritsar, the authorities seem to have been quite overcome with panic. The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjaub, Sir Michael O'Dwyer though a man of great ability and vigour of mind, did not feel much sympathy with the political aspirations of the Indian people, and had a greater faith in the efficacy of force and repression than of patience, tact and sympathy, in dealing with difficult and delicate situations. Two local leaders Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, the former, a Mahomedan barrister who had received his education in Germany, had incurred his wrath by their agitation, particularly in the cause of the *Khilafat*, and by their growing influence with the people who deeply esteemed and loved them; and on 10th April, that is, the very next day after the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, he ordered their deportation. This arbitrary and high-handed action, instead of over-awing the people, exasperated them all the more, and led to disturbances which grew so serious that the authorities had to open fire upon the crowds who, in their frenzy, committed, in their turn, numerous acts of violence. The civil authorities lost nerve, and asked the Senior Military officer to take charge of the city, and adopt such measures as he deemed proper. On 12th April, General Dyer, who commanded the Jullunder Division, arrived at Amritsar, and took over charge from the officer. The next day witnessed what is known as the Jallianwalla massacre, the following details of

which are given from the despatch of the Secretary of State for India on the report of the Hunter Committee, subsequently appointed to investigate and report upon the disturbances that had taken place in 1919 :—

"On the morning of April the 13th, Brigadier-General Dyer, who had arrived at Amritsar on the night of the 11th, issued a proclamation forbidding, *inter alia*, processions to parade in or outside the city and declaring that "any such procession or gathering of four men will be looked upon and treated as an unlawful assembly and dispersed by force of arms, if necessary." This proclamation was read out at various places in the city, in the course of the progress through the streets of a column of troops led by Brigadier-General Dyer personally, who left his quarters about 9 A.M. for this purpose and returned to them about 1-30 P.M. About an hour before his return to his quarters in Ram Bagh, Brigadier General Dyer had heard that, despite his proclamation, it was intended to hold a large meeting at Jallianwala Bagh at 4-30 that afternoon, and, at 4 P.M., he received a message that a crowd of about 1,000 had already assembled there. Shortly after 4 P.M., Brigadier General Dyer marched from Ram Bagh with picketing parties (as he had previously determined to picket the main gates of the city), and with a special party consisting of 50 Indian Infantry armed with rifles, 40 Indian Infantry armed only with "Kukris" (type of sword), and two armoured cars. He proceeded straight to Jallianwala Bagh dropping his picket parties *en route* and on arrival marched his infantry through a narrow lane into the Bagh and deployed them immediately right and left of the entrance. The armoured cars he left outside, as the lane was too narrow to admit them. Having deployed his troops Brigadier-General Dyer at once gave orders to open fire and continued a controlled fire on the dense crowd facing him in the enclosure (which he estimated at about 5,000 persons) for some 10 minutes until his ammunition supply was at the point of exhaustion. 1,650 rounds of ·303 mark VI ammunition were fired. The

fatal casualties as the result of this action are believed to be 379; the number of wounded has not been exactly ascertained, but is estimated by Lord Hunter's Committee at possibly three times the number of deaths."

The Jallianwalla massacre was followed by other excesses on the part of the military authorities, all deliberately intended to overawe and terrorize the people. The military authorities somehow persuaded themselves that a state of rebellion had arisen, calling for and justifying all the severe measures they had taken. The evidence, however, quite militates against the theory of a rebellion, either general or partial ; and it is difficult to understand why the Lieutenant-Governor and the military officials should have thought that the martial races of the Punjaub which had furnished such a large number of recruits to the army during the Great War, and otherwise helped the Government in every possible way in the prosecution of the war, had withdrawn their traditional allegiance from the British Crown, and suddenly become enemies bent on overthrowing British rule itself. It may be that they had a subconscious feeling that the deep and wide-spread discontent caused by the Khilafat affair to which we shall advert hereafter, coupled with the events that were taking place in Afganisthan at the time, might ultimately create a situation which could only be averted by anticipatory stern measures, however unjust and oppressive they might be in themselves. This anticipatory nervous state of mind may have been really unjustified in actual fact, as it undoubtedly is by any moral

canon of policy or action. But when one thinks of the mixed play of motives and feelings that sway human action, it is not impossible that they saw in the Khilafat agitation and in the possible reaction of events in the neighbouring Moslem Kingdom of Afganisthan upon the Moslem community in India, a likely danger to British rule which could only be forestalled and prevented by stern measures. His Majesty Habibullah Khan, King of Afganisthan, was murdered on 20th February 1919, and the new King, His Majesty Amanulla Khan, issued a stirring proclamation in which he declared that " the Government of Afganisthan should be internally and externally free and independent, that is to say, all rights of Government that are possessed by other independent Powers should be possessed in their entirety by Afganisthan". He further expressed his determination " to introduce such measures of reform as may prove useful and serviceable to the country and nation so that the Government and nation of Afganisthan may make a name and gain great renown in the civilized world and take its proper place among the civilized Powers of the world." On the 13th April 1919, that is, on the very day on which General Dyer fired on the helpless crowd at the Jallianwalla Bagh, a Durbar was held at Kabul, in which also he made a similar patriotic and stirring speech. Again, the Afghan Postmaster of Peshawar used, it appears, to send to the King sensational accounts of the agitation against the Rowlatt Bills and the great public excitement caused by them. It is

probable that all this may have influenced the civil and military authorities of the Punjaub in the measures they took. Whatever that may be, the Punjaub atrocities produced such a deep sense of horror and indignation among the people, that they led to far-reaching effects upon the course of events in India, and the wound caused by them has been so deep that it has not yet been healed. On October 1919, the Government of India, as has been already incidentally mentioned, appointed a Committee to report on the disturbances. The report of the Committee was submitted in March 1920 and the final orders of the Secretary of State thereon were passed in May next. Though Mr. Montagu expressed disapproval of General Dyer's action and demanded his resignation, the general feeling was that there was a good deal of whitewashing, and that adequate punitive action was not taken against all those officers, who had outraged humanity by their excesses. The Punjaub tragedy, so sad, so unexpected, swelled the rising tide of anti-British feeling, and was one of the potent causes of the non-co-operation movement.

Another cause of the movement was furnished by the Khilafat question. The war came to a sudden end towards the close of 1918, Turkey having signed an armistice on 30th October, and Germany on 11th November, of the year. The position of the Indian Mussalmans during the critical period of the War was extremely delicate and embarrassing; they had to undergo a severe mental struggle between two conflict-

ing loyalties, between their religious loyalty to the Caliph and their political loyalty to the British Crown. The British Government made repeated declarations that they had not the least intention of destroying Turkey, and President Wilson's famous list of fourteen points included the maintenance of Turkish independence, and of the territorial integrity of Asiatic Turkey. It was these solemn pledges and assurances that reconciled Indian Moslems to their position, preserved their loyalty to the British *Raj*, and persuaded them to render every assistance they could to the Government in the successful prosecution of the War. When, therefore, in course of time, after the armistice, the anti-Turkish attitude of the victorious *Entente* Powers became more and more apparent, and the terms of the secret treaties they had entered into among themselves during the War, for the purpose of partitioning the Turkish Empire, began to leak out they became alarmed, and resolved to do all that lay in their power to prevent the threatened danger to Turkey and the Khilafat. The Khilafat movement was started, and, on 24th November 1919, an All-India Khilafat Conference was held at Delhi under the presidency of Mr. Gandhi who had, in the meanwhile, thoroughly identified himself with the cause of the Mahomedans. Mr. Gandhi declared that the cause of the Moslems was the cause of the Hindus.

that "the test of friendship is true assistance in adversity, and whatever we are, Hindus, Parsees,

Christians or Jews, if we wish to live as one nation, surely, the interest of any of us must be the interest of all······We talk of the Hindu-Mahomedan unity. It would be an empty phrase if the Hindus hold aloof from the Mahomedans when their vital interests are at stake. Some have suggested that we, Hindus, can assist our Mahomedan countrymen, only on conditions. Conditional assistance is like adulterated cement which does not bind."

The Conference enjoined upon Mussalmans not to participate in the victory celebrations, and further resolved to progressively withhold all co-operation from the British Government, and to boycott British goods, in case the Turkish question was not satisfactorily solved. Another Conference, held at Bombay in February 1920, issued a manifesto, laying down the Muslim demands and warning the Government against the consequences of a wrong decision, particularly when not only the Mussalmans but also the entire Hindu population was joining them in their demands. An influential deputation went to England to wait upon Mr. Lloyd George, and to urge upon him the justice of the Khilafat cause, and the inexpediency of putting a further strain upon the loyalty and patience of the Mahomedans. But all these efforts were in vain. Mr. Lloyd George, upon whom Mr. Venezelos, the Greek Premier, exercised great influence, favoured a pro-Greek and anti-Turkish policy. Very severe peace terms were drafted, and made public in May 1920. Mr. Gandhi condemned them as humiliating to the Supreme Council and to British Ministers, and

he added : "if as a Hindu with deep reverence for Christianity I may say, they are a denial of Christ's teachings." The objections of the Turkish delegates to the terms were summarily dismissed, and on 10th August 1920, they obediently affixed their signatures to the dictated treaty. The worst fears of the Indian Mussalmans were realized, and the whole country was ablaze with righteous indignation at the breach of faith committed by Great Britain and her Allies, and at the scheme of partition of the Turkish Empire they had devised for their mutual self-aggrandisement. "The Treaty of Sevres" says Prof. Toynbee, in his book on "Turkey" "was a triumph of imperialism, for it carved up the richest areas of Western Asia for the gratification of the belligerent Allies, who sought their rewards in the hour of victory". Mahatma Gandhi now felt that he had no alternative, but to unfurl the banner of non-co-operation, and on the 28th May, 1920, the Khilafat Commitee decided to accept his proposal. Two days later, the All-India Congress Committee adopted a resolution for holding a special session of the National Congress to consider the question of non-co-operation. On 30th June, a joint Hindu-Muslim Conference was held at Allahabad, regarding the Khilafat question, and it was unanimously resolved that non-co-operation should be resorted to, after a month's notice to the Viceroy. On 1st August 1920, Mahatma Gandhi formally inaugurated the non-co-operation movement by returning the three medals which the Government

had granted him for meritorious services on different occasions and by addressing a letter to the Viceroy in which he declared that the attitude of the Government with regard to Khilafat and the Punjab made it impossible for him to continue co-operation with a Government that had acted so unscrupulously and for whom he could retain neither respect nor affection. In early September, the special Session of the Congress was held at Calcutta under the presidency of Lala Lajpatrai. The country was in a tense state of suspense as to the decision the Congress would reach on the question of non-co-operation. After a long debate in which Mrs. Besant, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and some other notable leaders strongly opposed the movement, it declared itself in favour of non-co-operation by a majority of 1855 votes as against 873 votes. Mahatma Gandhi triumphed, and his policy became the considered policy of the Indian National Congress, that is, of the largest and most dominant section of Indian opinion. India declared "a peaceful war" on the British Government and resolved to withdraw all co-operation from them, until the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs were redressed and *Swaraj* won.

It is idle to speculate what would have been the course of events if the Rowlatt Bills had not been introduced, and the victorious Powers had not treated Turkey with such severity, in the selfish spirit of national self-aggrandisement. In the light of the events which we have sketched above, one cannot

but realize the inadequacy of human designs, when one notes the significant fact that one of the Rowlatt Bills was withdrawn and the other remained a dead letter. In the same way, the regeneration of Turkey under Kemal Pasha which led to the tearing up of the Treaty of Sevres, and the settlement of peace terms in accordance with the wishes of the Turks themselves, shows how the most deliberate designs of the most powerful nations and statesmen can topple down, all of a sudden, like a house of cards. In the chain of events that synchronised with the many processes that necessarily had to be undergone before the new reforms could come into operation, it is impossible not to see the hand of the Mysterious which works out its own inscrutable designs in its own impenetrable ways. Those events thwarted Mr. Montagu's policy, gave a severe blow to the reforms, and greatly added to the inherent difficulties of working them satisfactorily, with any considerable measure of popular support.

CHAPTER X

The Non-co-operation Movement

and its Inwardness

I

THE adoption of the policy of non-co-operation by the Indian National Congress at Calcutta was followed by an unparalleled intensive propaganda all over the country in favour of the movement. A strong Committee was appointed to give effect to the programme; and it issued detailed instructions as to the steps that should be taken by local committees and leaders with a view to carrying out each item of the programme. Mahatma Gandhi undertook an extensive tour throughout the country, and wherever he went, thousands of men and women flocked to see him and hear his new gospel. In the eyes of the masses, the movement assumed the form and meaning of a keen and bitter struggle between India and England, between Indian Nationalism and British Imperialism; and Mahatma Gandhi was considered as the God-appointed leader of that movement. He came to be regarded as an *Avatar*, specially entrusted by the Great Maker and Director of the Universe with the high mission of punishing the un-righteous British Government, for its innumerable sins of commission and omission, of bringing about the regeneration of Mother India, and of

reviving her past glory and greatness. He spoke in the strong, direct, fearless, inspiring language of the prophet. He told the people that the British Government was satanic, that they had forfeited their confidence and allegiance by their atrocities in the Punjaub and their breach of faith as regards the Khilafat, that his great object was to establish *Rama Rajya*, the kingdom of Rama or righteousness, in place of the present satanic Government, and that such a kingdom could be established within a year, if only his message of non-co-operation was accepted and scrupulously carried out, in all its details and with the utmost regard for the root-principle of non-violence. The people listened with rapt attention; they believed with simple, quiet faith; new hopes filled their souls; the reference to *Rama Rajya* with its treasured associations of universal righteousness, justice and happiness, went home and made a deep impression upon their minds; and they looked forward to the promised day, when the satanic British Government would meet the fate it so richly deserved, and when, on its ruins, would arise the kingdom of Rama which alone would put an end to the growing miseries of the toiling masses, ground down by heavy taxation, ruthlessly harrassed and oppressed by selfish and cold-hearted officials,- the willing instruments of a foreign Government-and wallowing in poverty, ignorance and servitude. The propaganda conducted by such a marvellous personality on such appealing lines in support of such a great cause, had its

effect; and, though, as we shall see later on, the actual, practical response to the programme of non-co-operation was far from satisfactory or effective, when the National Congress met in its annual session at Nagpur, the scheme of non-co-operation was not only reaffirmed, but amplified and enlarged so as to include, within its scope, every item, from renunciation of voluntary association with the Government to non-payment of taxes. And this amplified and extended scheme of non-co-operation was passed with the approval and support of those very leaders, like Mr. C. R. Das, who, only, a few months before, had strongly opposed it. Thus, Mahatma Gandhi stood forth before India and the world, as the unopposed, triumphant leader of Indian nationalism, seeking its fulfilment by means of non-co-operation, a most remarkable and unique movement, ever launched by a subject people to obtain redress of its grievances and to win its freedom.

II

What was the scheme of non-co-operation which Mahatma Gandhi was thus able to impose upon the National Congress by his magnetic personality and superior will? Its objective was, as has been already pointed out, the redress of the Punjaub and the Khilafat wrongs and the establishment of *Swaraj*, which alone could prevent a repetition of such wrongs in future. It was a blend of political, social, economic and religious action. It had two sides, a negative or destructive side, and a positive or con-

structive side. Its negative or destructive side consisted in non-co-operation with the Government; its positive or constructive side, in the creation of complete unity among the constituent members of the Indian Community or Nation, and in the performance by the people themselves, through their own agencies, of those functions and activities of the state, co-operation from which was henceforth to be withheld. As non-co-operation with the Government cannot be successful except by complete co-operation amongst the people themselves, Mahatma Gandhi rightly insisted, first, upon Hindu unity by the settlement of all differences between Brahmans and Non-Brahmans, and by the removal of untouchability and the elevation of every suppressed class, and, secondly, upon Hindu-Moslem unity, that is, unity not only between Hindus and Mahomedans, the two premier communities in the country, but among Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsees, Anglo-Indians, Jews and every other minority community. Non-co-operation with the Government thus meant and involved perfect co-operation, concord, good-will and unity, among all the Hindu castes and so-called outcastes, and all those different communities which went to form the vast population of India. The religious element in the scheme came in the fundamental principle of non-violence, not only in deed but also in word, and in the appeal made to religious heads to reform Hinduism in the matter of its treatment of the suppressed classes.

The actual programme of non-co-operation with the Government was to consist, mainly, in what was called the "triple boycott," *viz.*, boycott of educational institutions, of law Courts, and of the new reformed Councils. Parents and guardians of school children under the age of 16 were to withdraw them from Government-controlled or Government-affiliated institutions. Students of the age of 16 and over were to withdraw from such institutions, if they felt conscientious objection to the prosecution of their studies in them. Lawyers were to suspend their practice; litigants to settle their disputes by arbitration. The new legislatures were to be boycotted by none seeking election; but as elections were actually held, and almost all the seats with very few exceptions were filled, the elected members were to be called upon to resign their seats. But as there was little possibility of those who sought election in spite of the mandate of the Congress, to resign their seats in deference to its wishes, the electors were not to ask for any political service from the elected members. Thus, the Government and the civilized world were to be made to realise that the new Councils did not represent the popular will, and that what they did, had no popular approval or sanction, in other words, that the new Governmental system was not based on, and did not represent, the will of the people, or public opinion.

The constructive work, so far as education and the administration of justice were concerned, was to

consist in the establishment of National Schools and Colleges, and of arbitration Courts. The authorities of Government-controlled or Government-affiliated institutions were to nationalise them. Students were either to continue their studies in national institutions or, considering that the country had entered on a state of war which called for sacrifice and emergent activities, to the temporary neglect of ordinary duties, to devote themselves to some special work in connection with the non-co-operation movement.

The economic part of the programme was to consist in a boycott of foreign trade relations by merchants and traders, in the encouragement of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, and in a well-considered scheme of economic boycott to be prepared by experts nominated by the All-India Congress Committee.

A service to be called the Indian National Service was to be organised for promoting the non-co-operation movement, and a national Fund to be raised for financing the service and the movement in general. A network of organisations was to be spread throughout the country, by establishing committees even in villages, for the purpose of accelerating the progress of non-co-operation. The Police and the Soldiery were not to be left out of the scheme; they were to be exhorted to cultivate better relations with the people, to refuse to subordinate their creed and country to the fulfilment of orders of their officers and, if necessary, to resign their service when the call of the country demanded such action. Government servants in other depart-

ments were, also, to act in the same way, in the meanwhile, openly attending popular gatherings, and rendering financial assistance to national movements. And, lastly, as self-sacrifice was essential to the success of non-co-operation, every man and woman in the country was to make the utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to the national movement.

III.

Such was the scheme of national action evolved by the master mind of Mahatma Gandhi. How can we appraise it rightly and justly? The criticism often levelled against it that it was a purely destructive movement is so obviously unjust that it is not necessary to refute it. No doubt it contained some negative or destructive elements; and it was precisely on the rock of these elements that it ultimately foundered. The triple boycott proved a failure. Though a few students, here and there, left Government institutions and joined national schools and colleges, the former continued to thrive as before. Some lawyers in the front rank of the profession, like Pandit Motilal Nehru, the late Mr. C. R. Das and Mr. M. R. Jayakar, who had amassed large fortunes, were able to suspend practice, and devoted themselves to the national cause; but the vast bulk of the members of the profession either had no faith in the efficacy of the boycott of the law Courts, or found it impossible to obey the mandate of the Congress. As regards the boycott of the new legislatures, Mahatma Gandhi attached great importance to it; in his speech at the

Special Session at Calcutta, he described it as the "fundamental thing" in his programme, though a few months before, at the Amritsar Congress, he had declared himself in favour of working the reforms in the spirit of honest co-operation. On this important question, the leaders had been divided. Mr. Tilak, who unfortunately died in July 1920 before the special meeting of the Congress, to the intense sorrow of his countrymen, causing a void in the political life of India which has not yet been filled, was, in principle, opposed to the boycott of Councils. As he told Mahatma Gandhi himself, he was of opinion that it would be better to go to the Councils and obstruct where it was necessary, and to co-operate where it was necessary; he was, however, willing to leave aside his personal opinion and join the Mahomedans, provided they acted up to their decision to boycott the Councils. As a matter of fact, Mahomedan candidates came forward to seek election in the various constituencies; and it is doubtful whether Mr. Tilak, if he had been alive, would not have strongly opposed the boycott of the Councils. Be that as it may, by his death, the Indian National Congress was deprived of an able, experienced, far-seeing, and great leader whose wise guidance would have been most valuable in enabling it to form a reasoned judgment on Mahatma Gandhi's proposals. One sometimes likes to speculate as to the course of events, if he had been alive at the Session of the Congress held at

Nagpur. Though he was a political idealist himself, his idealism was yet illumined by a sufficient sense of the realities of the situation to enable him to perceive that the practical difficulties in the way of the successful execution of the scheme chalked out by Mahatma Gandhi were so formidable, that unless it was divested of its impracticable elements and brought more in line with the dictates or conditions of human nature, and of Indian Society, its ultimate collapse was inevitable. Such speculations are, however, futile. The boycott of the Councils, too, proved unsuccessful. In spite of the most vigorous propaganda carried on to persuade intending candidates not to send in their nominations or to withdraw their candidature, there were nearly two thousand candidates for the total number of 774 seats, and it was only in six cases that there was no election at all for want of a candidate. The propaganda in favour of the boycott, however, produced considerable effect upon voters, whose natural indifference to the exercise of the franchise, particularly, as it was the first occasion on which they were called upon to exercise it, found a ready excuse in the boycott movement. Though, on the whole, the agitation was fairly successful in making it clear that the new legislatures were not truly representative of the people, yet the fact remained that every one of them was fully constituted and functioned, as designed under the constitution.

But whatever criticism may thus be justly levelled against the non-co-operation movement, particularly

with regard to those of its aspects which were impracticable, utopian, or revolutionary in their character, there can be no doubt that it was a magnificent conception with some elements of enduring value and perpetual inspiration. In his essay on 'Compromise,' Lord Morley says "There is a certain quality attaching alike to thought and expression and action, for which we may borrow the name of grandeur. It has been noticed, for instance, that Bacon strikes and impresses us, not merely by the substantial merit of what he achieved, but still more, by a certain greatness of scheme and conception. The quality is not a mere idle decoration······Height of aim and nobility of expression are true forces." Mahatma Gandhi's non-co-operation movement was, no doubt, a failure, so far as the carrying out of the triple boycott or the attainment of its object, was concerned; but there is a certain grandeur and greatness about the whole conception and scheme, which cannot fail to make an irresistible appeal to all those whose faith in the force of ideas and in the ultimate triumph of great principles and right causes is unshaken. The very conception of non-co-operation with a bad or foreign Government, however impracticable or ill-considered may be the particular forms of expression which it may assume, if widely cherished by the people, cannot but vitally affect their attitude towards the Government, and inspire them with a keener sense of self-respect and a stouter spirit of resistance. After all, no Government can succeed in maintaining its rule for any length of time

without the willing consent and co-operation of the people; and the spirit of non-co-operation, apart from particular forms or methods of non-co-operation which may or may not be practicable, cannot but succeed in bending the Government to the popular will, and in enabling subject nations, struggling to be free and to attain their national self-realization, to gain their ends. Non-co-operation is a powerful weapon in the hands of an oppressed people, and the fact that it is realised, and may be used, as such, cannot but have a wholesome influence upon the Government, unless, indeed, it is so hopelessly bad as to be beyond all such influence. Non-co-operation cannot, indeed, succeed, unless the people are united and organised, and, unless they have developed a high degree of patriotism and are ready to undergo great sacrifice; but these are conditions which are not beyond fulfilment in the case of a people, like the people of India.

With regard to the constructive side of the movement, its highest distinction lay in the emphasis it laid upon the supreme necessity of bringing about Brahman, Non-Brahman, and Hindu-Moslem unity. Mahatma Gandhi belongs to that school of thought, represented by some of the great Indians whom modern India has produced, men like the late Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the late Justice Ranade, the late Mr. Gokhale, and the late Justice Telang, which has always insisted that the future Indian nation can be built up only on the granite foundation of perfect unity, first, among the Hindus

themselves, and, secondly, among the Hindus and other communities. Every Indian, according to this school, must grow up as an Indian first, and Hindu, Moslem and so forth, afterwards. The aggressive communal tendencies which mar the national life of India today, or the slogan that" Hindusthan is for the Hindus" are entirely foreign and abhorrent to the thoughts and ideals of this school. Mahatma Gandhi's noble efforts in the cause of this unity have not, alas, yet been crowned with success; but there can be no doubt that they are among the best and highest contributions he has made to the re-making of India. In his intense zeal for Hindu-Moslem unity, he has been blamed by some critics for making undue concessions to the sentiments, wishes, and even the prejudices of the Moslem community. But, as Mr. Rene Fulop-Miller, the German author of "Lenin and Gandhi" has remarked,

> "However justified some of these objections may in themselves appear to be, the greatness of Gandhi's undertaking remains beyond dispute. The fact that he succeeded, even if only partially, and perhaps not permanently, in reaching a national agreement in the century-old hostility between the two creeds, remains an historic fact, which is bound to be numbered among the most important in the history of India."

As regards the removal of untouchability, it is impossible to over estimate the effect of Mahatma Gandhi's efforts in the matter. His fervent appeal to religious heads to reform Hinduism in the matter of its treatment of the suppressed classes has not evoked adequate response. But the movement for the removal

of untouchability and for the elevation of the condition of the depressed classes has become so wide-spread and powerful that in spite of the opposition of extreme orthodoxy and the indifference of some sections of the population, its success is only a question of time. No one has given a greater impetus, both by precept and example, to this question of raising the status of the depressed classes and removing untouchability, than Mahatma Gandhi. He has not hesitated to impress upon the people, in his characteristic manner, that there can be no *Swaraj* without the removal of untouchability.

On the whole, therefore, a sound critical judgment will not condemn the non-co-operation movement started by Mahatma Gandhi as purely negative, utopian or harmful. While fully recognising the objections which can be justly raised against it, and the evil results it produced in certain directions, it will, at the same time, seek to appreciate its merits and to realise its inwardness. After all that can be said against it, it must be recognised that it was a nation's indignant protest against the Punjaub and Khilafat wrongs, and a vehement expression of its passionate longing for *Swaraj*. The Punjaub and Khilafat wrongs are no longer live issues. The former has been virtually forgotten and forgiven; a nation cannot go on brooding over such a wrong for ever; the latter has lost all its force and meaning owing to the deposition of the Sultan and the abolition of the Khilafat by the Turks. But the longing for *Swaraj* has remained, and it will

continue to seek expression in some form or other, until it is fully satisfied.

IV

The Nagpur Congress, not being content with the re-affirmation and amplification of the resolution on Non-co-operation, passed two other important resolutions which showed how the attitude of the political classes was stiffening. One made a change in the creed of the Congress: it declared that its object was the attainment of *Swaraj* by all legitimate and peaceful means, not, as hitherto, the attainment of Dominion status by constitutional means; the other declared the boycott of the visit of H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught to India to inaugurate the new constitution. The idea of national independence was vaguely floating in the minds of some people, though they felt doubts as to the wisdom of giving expression to it by means of a resolution. Mahatma Gandhi put the position thus:

> "We must make the clearest possible declaration to the world and to the whole of India that we may not possibly have British connection if the British people will not do this elementary justice (of redressing the Punjaub and khilafat wrongs). I do not for one moment suggest that we want to end British connection, at all cost, unconditionally. If the British connection is for the advancement of India, we do not want to destroy it; but if it is inconsistent with our national self-respect, then, it is our bounden duty to destroy it."

There were, of course, some who wanted to end British connection at all costs, believing that no foreign connection could be to the advancement of India, that foreign rule was always an unmitigated evil and that

every country has a natural right to independence. Mahatma Gandhi does not belong to this school of thought; the influence of Ranade, Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and the Liberal school of thought upon him is visible in his idea that England's rule over India might prove a beneficent force making for the advancement and uplift of the Indian people. But he made it clear that he was bent upon creating India "with, without or against the existing Government," just as Mazzini had declared that he would create Italy with, without or against the Government of Charles Albert, King of Sardinia.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught landed at Madras on the 10th of January 1921, and the Madras Legislative Council was the first reformed Council to be opened by him. His visits to Delhi and the various provincial cities were marked by *Hartal* and other popular demonstrations of anti-British feeling, though the inauguration ceremony itself in each case was performed successfully. Mahatma Gandhi addressed a letter to His Royal Highness, explaining why he had advised the Congress to declare boycott of the Duke's visit and appealing to the Duke, and through him, every Englishman, to understand the view-point of the non-co-operationists. His Royal Highness left India on 28th February and, in his farewell message, declared that "the voice of India has not carried the weight and does not carry the weight which India has a right to claim." His Royal Highness's speeches were marked by fine

sentiments, and he bore himself throughout with that noble dignity, so characteristic of his Royal family; but so far as the conciliation of Indian sentiment and the removal of the existing tension were concerned, the Duke's visit was a failure. The tide of the non-co-operation movement, of anti-British feeling and of Nationalism was actually rising when His Royal Highness departed from the shores of India. What impressions he took away with him of the Indian situation, and what advice, if any, he gave to the British Government, as regards meeting it, must remain shrouded in the Book of Government Secrets.

CHAPTER XI

THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT (*continued*)

ARREST OF MAHATMA GANDHI.

I

With the inauguration of the Indian Legislature and the Provincial Councils, the struggle for *Swaraj* came to be waged on two different but parallel lines, by means of direct action in the form of the Non-co-operation movement, and also, by means of parliamentary action, through the new Legislatures, particularly, the two Houses of the Indian Parliament, the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. The struggle for *Swaraj* in the Legislatures will form the subject of the next chapter; our aim, in this chapter, is to describe the course of the Non-co-operation movement till the arrest and incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi in March 1922.

The attitude of Government towards the movement in its earliest stage was one of patient watchfulness mixed with a feeling of amused contempt, and of expectation that it would not receive the support of the general public. In opening the Simla session of the Imperial Legislative Council—the last of that Council—Lord Chelmsford described the movement as "the most foolish of all foolish

schemes," and expressed his confidence that it would fail by reason of "its intrinsic inanity." In the beginning of November 1920, after the special Session of the Congress at Calcutta had adopted the Non-co-operation policy and programme, but before the annual session at Nagpur had ratified and stiffened them, the Government issued a resolution in which they again expressed the hope that the sanity of the classes and masses alike would reject non-co-operation as "a visionary and chimerical scheme." After the Nagpur Congress, however, the Government began to adopt a stronger attitude, and local officers were given a free hand in adopting measures of repression, if they thought that local circumstances called for such strong action. In March 1921, the Government declared in the Legislative Assembly that they would not hesitate to put down the movement by repression, if it led to violence. In short, with the spread of the movement among the masses, the Government decided to meet it both by repression, and by deliberate and organised efforts, to rally all those reactionary, loyal or moderate forces which were either hostile or indifferent to the movement.

But the measures of repression which the authorities began to adopt simply served to swell the rising tide of anti-British feeling. Mahatma Gandhi now began to provide the movement with the sinews of war; it was resolved to raise a national fund of one crore of rupees, and also to strengthen the Congress organisation by increasing its membership to one

crore. His great object was to make the Congress a formidable national organisation, thoroughly representative of the people, with ramifications spread all over the country, and with ample resources, both in men and money, to carry on the struggle to the bitter end. While he was thus preparing the nation and organising national forces, the Moslem protagonists of the non-co-operation movement, particularly the *Khilafatists*, were growing more and more militant, being probably led to such increasing militancy by the new offensive commenced at this time against the Turks by the Greeks, and also by the nationalist movements in Egypt and Afghanistan. A conference of Moslem Divines declared that the national independence of India was essential to the integrity of the Moslem world, and urged that non-co-operation should be carried on till independence was won. They further urged that the Moslems should, no longer, furnish any recruits to the Indian army, and a *Fatwa* to that effect signed by 500 Moslem divines was subsequently issued and circulated among the people.

In April 1921, Lord Reading succeeded Lord Chelmsford as Viceroy. The new Viceroy had won a great name as a diplomat during the War; and it was hoped that his patience and tact in dealing with difficult and delicate situations would stand the Government in good stead in meeting the political situation in India. Nor was the hope unrealised. He showed remarkable skill in dealing with the Non-co-ope-

ration movement. He aimed at undermining the extraordinary influence of Mahatma Gandhi, and, at a psychological moment, when it had been so far weakened that there was no longer any fear of strong action against him leading to serious consequences, he sanctioned his prosecution and thereby struck a heavy blow at the Non-co-operation movement. Soon after his arrival, he succeeded in persuading Mahatma Gandhi to seek an interview with him at Simla, which ultimately resulted in an apology being tendered, under Mahatma Gandhi's advice, by the Alli brothers who had taken so prominent a part in the *Khilafat* agitation, for making violent speeches. Lord Reading with his shrewd common sense saw that Mahatma Gandhi's ultra-religious faith in, and devotion to, the principle of non-violence was a point in his policy which could be turned to advantage in dealing with the movement. Without at first telling Mahatma Gandhi that the Government had decided to prosecute the Ali brothers for certain violent speeches, as he should have done, if the game was to be played, he showed those speeches to him; and the non-co-operation leader agreeing with the Viceroy that they were calculated to incite to violence, undertook to advise the Ali brothers to express publicly their regret for having made such speeches. It was at this stage that Lord Reading informed Mahatma Gandhi that the Government had decided to institute criminal proceedings against the brothers, but that they would not

be taken in view of the apology which Mahatma Gandhi promised to ask the brothers to make. The apology was published in due course; and it further transpired, to the surprise of many people, that in the course of many long conversations that took place between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi, the latter had not raised the question of *Swaraj* at all. In a speech which Lord Reading subsequently made at the Chelmsford Club at Simla, he spoke of the Gandhi interview and apology in a vein which gave the impression that the Government had scored a triumph.

All this produced a jarring effect on the public mind which found it difficult to appreciate the action of the unbending non-co-operation leader in going out of his way to meet the Viceroy, and then falling an easy victim to his subtle diplomacy. Many people could not resist the feeling that Mahatma Gandhi had bungled. The whole incident was the first subtle blow struck at the Non-co-operation movement and its leader by an astute Viceroy.

This reverse, however, did not seriously affect the course of the Non-co-operation movement. The apology did not lead to the downfall of the Ali brothers who became still more truculent in their utterances. Mr. Mahomed Ali declared that though he still adhered to the programme of non-violent non-co-operation, he and his brother would not fail to exercise their right to take up arms against the enemies of Islam, if non-co-operation proved a failure, and *Jehad* proclaimed according to the law of Islam. At the All-India

Khilafat Conference held at Karachi on 8th July 1921, strong resolutions were passed, reiterating the Muslim demands about the integrity of the Khilafat, congratulating Gazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha and his Government on their courage and suffering in the cause of Islam, and declaring it unlawful for any Muslim to serve in the British army or to help or acquiesce in its recruitment. The conference further threatened that if the British Government, directly or indirectly, openly or secretly, fought the Angora Government, the Muslims of India would start civil disobedience, establish complete independence and hoist the flag of the Indian Republic.

Events were now moving fast. Just at this time, the Government announced that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales would visit India in winter. The Government had in the past so often exploited the Throne for the purpose of evoking the traditional loyalty of the Princes and people of India, and thereby strengthening their hold on the country, and at the same time demonstrating to the outside world how deeply attached India was to the British Empire, that it was no wonder that the All-India Congress Committee regarded the proposed visit of the Prince as a political move calculated to give strength and support to a system of government designed to keep India as long as possible from her birthright of *Swaraj*. The Committee, therefore, decided to boycott the Prince, and urged the people to refrain from participating in or assisting any welcome

to him or any function organised officially or otherwise in his honour. This decision to boycott the Heir-Apparent to the Throne roused the anger of Government and the British community in India, and led to a series of developments which brought the Non-co-operation movement to a head.

Mahatma Gandhi's appeal for a national fund of one crore of rupees met with the most magnificent response from all classes of the people, and the amount was collected by the appointed date. The All-India Congress Committee now urged upon the people to bring about a complete boycott of foreign cloth; and as an impressive demonstration of the nation's determination to do so, an immense quantity of foreign cloth was burnt on 1st August—the anniversary of Mr. Tilak's death—the fire being lighted by Mahatma Gandhi.

The course of the Non-co-coperation movement was not undisturbed by serious breaches of the peace at various places, though Mahatma Gandhi was never tired of impressing upon the people the utmost necessity of maintaining non-violence at any cost, however great might be the provocation to commit violence. The authorities held the Non-co-operation movement responsible for every breach of the peace; but if the facts in each case were impartially sifted and carefully appreciated, it would probably be found that at least, in some cases, the outbursts of popular fury would have been averted, if local officials had shown greater restraint and tact in dealing with the people. On the

other hand, it is possible that even provocation would not have led, in some cases, to any disturbance but for the anti-British feeling aroused and intensified by the non-co-operation movement. Be that as it may, serious disturbances occurred at various places, causing much loss of life and property. The most terrible outbreak took place among the Moplahs of Malabar on 20th August 1921. The Moplahs are fanatical Muslims easily prone to violence, with a bigoted faith in the tenets of their religion. In spite of the efforts of the authorities to keep them away from the influence of the Khilafat agitation, the message of the non-co-operation and Khilafat movements had reached them; and their feelings against the British were as bitter as those of any other section of Indian Muslims. An attempt to arrest some of their leaders led to a disturbance which ultimately grew into a virtual rebellion against the British *Raj*. The Moplahs killed some Europeans and many Hindus, the latter for not joining them in their rebellion, and committed the worst excesses. They paralysed the administration for several days and set up a Khilafat republic. The rebellion was put down in due course; but it clearly proved the power of the Khilafat and the non-co-operation agitation.

The next important event in the history of the non-co-operation movement was the arrest on the 17th September of the Ali brothers and some other Muslim leaders for their advocacy of the resolution passed at Karachi, urging Muslims not to serve in the Indian army.

The prosecution which ended in their conviction and imprisonment made them national heroes, and led to anti-Government demonstrations all over the country. At numerous public meetings, the Karachi resolution was repeated, and many Khilafatists and others deliberately courted prosecution. This defiance of authority was significant, showing as it did that the prestige of the Government had seriously declined, and measures of repression had lost all terrors for the people. Mahatma Gandhi, who is intensely jealous of "the fundamental rights" of man, took up the challenge, and, in a manifesto issued by him and 46 other non-co-operation leaders, they declared :

"In view of the prosecution of the Ali brothers and others for the reasons stated in the Government of Bombay Communique dated 15th September 1921, we, the undersigned, speaking in our individual capacity, desire to state that it is an inherent right of every one to express his opinion without restraint about the propriety of citizens offering their services to, or remaining in the employ of, the Government, whether in the civil or the military department.

"We, the undersigned, state it as our opinion that it is contrary to national dignity for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and more especially, as a soldier, under a system of Government which has brought about India's economic, moral and political degradation and which has used the soldiery and the Police for repressing national aspirations, as, for instance, at the time of the Rowlatt Act agitation, and which has used the soldiers for crushing the liberty of the Arabs, the Egyptians, the Turks and other nations who have done no harm to India.

"We are also of opinion that it is a duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood."

This manifesto was endorsed in the resolution passed by the working Committee of the Congress, a small body of 15 men, which had meanwhile been created to formulate and execute the policy of the Congress in emergent matters, and was subsequently confirmed by the All-India Congress Committee. It was also resolved, in pursuance of the policy of boycotting the Prince, to proclaim a general *Hartal* throughout India on the day of his arrival. The policy of civil disobedience was also now sanctioned, and provinces were authorized to undertake it, on their own responsibility, under certain conditions, one of which was that no civil régister would be supported out of the public funds. Thus, on the eve of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, public feeling was still further embittered by the repressive measures taken by the Government, and in particular, by the prosecution of the Khilafat leaders; and in consequence, the Non-co-operation movement assumed a more menacing and militant aspect. The situation was pregnant with an open serious conflict between Mahatma Gandhi and his followers on the one hand and the Government on the other.

II.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales landed at Bombay on 17th November 1921. He was accorded a hearty official reception at the pier, which was participated in by the Municipal Corporation of Bombay which presented him with an address of welcome.

The city of Bombay has never been conspicuous for extreme political views; its politics has always been characterised by moderation, a vivid sense of realities and constitutionalism. A considerable section of opinion in the city considered the decision of the All-India Congress Committee to boycott the Prince, a blunder, and the city was divided into two camps, the boycotters and the non-boycotters. This sharp conflict of opinion and feeling broke out into open rupture; and as the Prince was passing through the decorated route, serious disturbances took place in some parts of the city, and lasted for four days resulting in a heavy casualty of killed and injured. Mahatma Gandhi was deeply aggrieved by the outbursts of popular fury; and so profound was the impression the disturbance made upon his mind that he took all responsibility for it upon himself and declared his intention to suspend civil disobedience. With brutal frankness which some of his followers considered impolitic, he wrote:

"With non-violence on our lips, we have terrorised those who happened to differ from us. The *Swaraj* that I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils."

But the centre of attention was soon shifted to Calcutta. The grand success that attended the *Hartal* in that city, showing the splendid organisation and unity of the non-co-operation workers and their increasing hold upon the masses, was gall and wormwood to the bureaucracy and the non-official European community; and on 18th November, 1921, the Bengal

Chamber of Commerce addressed a letter to the Government of Bengal in which they described the *Hartal* as a triumph of organisation, declared that the prestige of the Government had received a severe blow, and urged measures of repression with a view to asserting their authority :

"In order to understand", they said, "how successful the movement was, its leading features must be surveyed. In the first place, the means of locomotion were paralysed. No tram-cars "ticca gharries" or rickshaws were allowed to run, and practically no taxi-cabs. Office gharries could not be utilised. Private motor-cars were interfered with, and many drivers dragged from their seats even in the European quarters of the city. Industrial labour went on strike for the day······The Municipal Services collapsed. The streets were unswept and the dustbins remained unemptied. The shopkeepers were afraid to open their shops ; attempts were made to prevent children going to schools ; and even the police courts were closed. At night, the gas lamps were dim and streets were deserted·········The success of their (that is, of the volunteers') exertions must, of necessity, encourage the leaders of the movement to redouble their efforts. What is possible for one day is possible for more than one. Indeed, there seems no reason to doubt that this is merely a trial of strength, preparatory to the proclamation and organisation of a complete HARTAL to be observed for the week during which his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will be in Calcutta······The position of the movement is that the people are rapidly losing, if they have not already lost, all confidence in the Government established by law in the city. They are being systematically taught that the Government has passed away, and that another Government has been set up in its place ; and this doctrine they are accepting and acting upon."

The response of the Government to the Chamber's demand for repression was instantaneous. The very

next day, they issued a notification declaring the Congress and Khilafat volunteer organisation as unlawful. On the 25th November, the Commissioner of Police, by proclamation, suppressed all public assemblies and processions for three months within the limits of the town and the suburbs of Calcutta, and similar proclamations were issued in some of the more important mofussil towns. And these proclamations and notifications were followed by a speech by Lord Ronaldshay, the Governor of Bengal, addressed to the Bengal Legislative Council, in which he asked the members of the Council and the public in general to co-operate with the Government in putting down lawlessness, and threatened to take further powers for the purpose, if the existing ones were found inadequate.

It became quite apparent that the Government had decided to take all possible repressive measures to put down the movement to boycott the Prince's visit; and the example set by the Bengal Government was quickly followed by the Governments of most of the other Provinces. In the Punjaub, United Provinces, Assam and Delhi provinces, volunteer organisations were declared illegal, and public meetings and processions prohibited. But all these measures of repression failed to achieve their object; on the contrary, they evoked a spirit of stout resistance and of self-sacrifice among the people which was perhaps unparalleled in the annals of modern India. The Bengal Congress Committee and the Khilafat Committee took up the challenge, condemned the

orders of the authorities as high-handed and unjust, and appealed to the public to defy them by enrolling themselves as volunteers. Mr. C. R. Das issued the following stirring appeal to the Congress workers :—

"The recent communique of the Government of Bengal, the order of the Commissioner of Police, and the various orders under section 144 issued by magistrates in different districts of Bengal, make it absolutely clear that the bureaucracy has made up its mind to crush the movement of non-co-operation. The people of Bengal have therefore resolved to persevere with all their strength in their struggle for freedom. My message to them is one of hope and encouragement. I knew from the beginning that the bureaucracy would be the first to break the law. It began its illegal career at the very outset by occasional orders under section 144. It continued the unjust and illegal application of the section in opposition to this movement. Now that the movement is about to succeed, it has adopted forgotten laws and forgotten methods, and section 144 is being indiscriminately used to further the same object.

"Our duty is clear. The Indian National Congress has declared that *Swaraj* is our only goal and non-co-operation is the only method by which to reach that goal. Whatever the bureaucracy does, the nationalists of Bengal cannot forget their ideal. The people of Bengal are now on their trial. It entirely depends on them whether they would win or lose. I ask my countrymen to be patient, I appeal to them to undergo all sufferings cheerfully, I call upon them not to forsake the sacred work which the Indian National Congress has enjoined.

"The Congress work is done and can only be done by volunteers. Let it be clearly understood that every worker, young or old, man or woman, is a volunteer. I offer myself as a volunteer in the service of the Congress. I trust that, within a few days, there would be a million volunteers for the work of the Province. Our cause is sacred, our method is peaceful and non-violent. Do you not realise that Service of our country is Service of God? I charge you to remem-

ber that no communique of earthly Government can be allowed to stop God's Worship. I appeal to the people of Bengal to realise this truth. I pray to God that it may be given to the bureaucracy to understand, appreciate and recognise this great truth."

Civil disobedience of the orders of the Government began in earnest. Mr. Chitta Ranjan Das, a young son of Mr. C. R. Das, was among the first to enrol himself and work as a volunteer. As soon as he went out in the open street and cried " Hartal on the 24th", a European sargeant arrested him and took him to the lock-up. Next day, his mother, Mrs. Das, and two other ladies of the family, followed the example of the son. " It was torture for us " said Mrs. Das " to stay when our young boys were going to gaol." They went along selling *Khaddar* and crying out " Brothers and Sisters, remember *Hartal* on the 24th." They, too, were immediately arrested by a European sargeant.

The news of the arrest of the ladies spread like wild-fire and threw Calcutta into the greatest excitement. When women join the fray, and deliberately and heroically court arrest and imprisonment, the cause for which they undergo such willing and cheerful sacrifices, becomes irresistible. Lord Ronaldshay seems now to have realised that the people of Bengal, under their great leader Mr. Das, were determined not to yield to the repressive policy of the Government, and that, therefore, the situation might develop into a serious crisis by the time His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales arrived in Calcutta. He, therefore,

sought to explore the avenue of negotiation with Mr. Das, proposing that if the boycott of the Prince would be called off, the Government would be able to withdraw their repressive measures. Mr. Das told the Governor that the boycott had been proclaimed by the Congress and could be lifted only by that body. On 10th December, Mr. Das himself worked as a volunteer, and was arrested. His arrest was followed by that of all the prominent leaders of the Congress and Khilafat organisations in the City. The Government now desired to make a greater show of authority and to overawe the people in every possible way. Newspaper offices were searched and Congress and Khilafat offices raided. The military was called in, and British soldiers were stationed at different places. But the stream of volunteers flowed in, and arrests went on, every day. At Allahabad, Lahore and other places, the same policy of arresting leaders and clapping them into jail was pursued with relentless vigour. Lala Lajapatrai and Pandit Motilal Nehru were both arrested. Everywhere, there was the same story, disobedience to orders followed by arrests and imprisonment. A wave of national enthusiasm swept over the land ; and within about a month, no less than twenty-five thousand people suffered imprisonment rather than submit to national self-humiliation. The non-co-operation movement rose to sublime heights, and the marvellous patriotism, courage, unity and self-sacrifice which the people displayed at the time constitute an inspiring chapter in the annals of Modern India. Even

those who had not joined the non-co-operation movement condemned the repressive measures of the Government. An attempt was made by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and others to bring about a Round Table Conference, at which both the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi would be present, to consider the situation and bring about a satisfactory settlement, so that the ban against the Prince's visit might be removed, and the Royal visitor receive proper reception during his stay at Calcutta. But this time, Mahatma Gandhi, probably wiser by experience, refused to fall into the trap. He insisted on certain conditions before he could agree to attend the Conference; but, as the Viceroy did not accept those conditions, the idea of a Round Table conference was ultimately abandoned; and when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales arrived at Calcutta on 24th December, the relations between the Government and the people were as bitter and as much estranged as they could possibly be.

It was in this atmosphere that the Indian National Congress met at Ahmedabad on 27th December 1921. As the President-elect, Mr. C. R. Das, had been in jail, Hakim Ajmal Khan acted as President in his place. The imprisonment of most of the leaders. instead of damping the ardour of the delegates, infused fresh life and vigour into them; and Mahatma Gandhi himself was exceedingly happy that there had been such a remarkable manifestation of soul force among Congress workers. Naturally, the situation created by the repressive policy of the Government received the most

earnest consideration of the Congress. It was resolved to meet that policy by organising individual and mass civil disobedience, and the Congress earnestly appealed to all to offer themselves for arrest by joining the National Volunteer Corps. Mahatma Gandhi was invested with full powers as Dictator of the Congress, with only two limitations upon his sole authority, viz., (1) that he must not conclude any terms of peace with the Government of India or the British Government without the previous sanction of the All-India Congress Committee to be finally ratified by the Congress, specially convened for the purpose, and (2) that he must not change the creed of the Congress without its leave. In asking the delegates to sanction mass civil disobedience, Mahatma Gandhi made a courageous speech, in the course of which he said :—

"This resolution is not an arrogant challenge to anybody, but it is a challenge to the authority that is enthroned on arrogance. It is a challenge to the authority which disregards the considered opinion of millions of thinking human beings. It is an humble and an irrevocable challenge to authority, which, in order to save itself, wants to crush freedom of opinion and freedom of association, the two lungs that are absolutely necessary for a man to breathe the oxygen of liberty; and if there is any authority in this country that wants to curb the freedom of speech and freedom of association, I want to be able to say in your name, from this platform, that that authority will perish, unless it repents before an India that is steeled with high courage, noble purpose and determination, even if every one of the men and women who choose to call themselves Indians is blotted out of the earth.

"I am a man of peace. I believe in peace. But I do not want peace at any price. I do not want the peace that

you find in stone; I do not want the peace that you find in grave; but I do want that peace which you find embedded in the human breast which is exposed to the arrows of a whole world but which is protected from all harm by the power of the Almighty God."

Another question which the Congress was called upon to consider was whether the creed of the Congress which had been changed only the previous year should again be changed from SWARAJ into that of complete independence free from all foreign control. Maulana Hasrat Mohani moved a resolution urging the change; but Mahatma Gandhi opposed it; and it was negatived by a majority, though a substantial minority voted in favour of it. Maulana Hasrat Mohani asked the Moslems to go further than the Congress, and in his address as president of the All India Moslem League, he advocated not only national independence, but the declaration of an Indian Republic, called the United States of India, on 1st January 1922. The Subjects Committee of the Khilafat Conference passed a resolution urging all Muhammadans and other Communities to endeavour to destroy British imperialism and secure complete independence.

These proposals about national independence show a growing movement of thought in favour of severing the British connection. As we shall see later on, it was not until 1927 that the National Congress adopted a resolution in favour of national independence. Strange as it may seem, Mahatma Gandhi has never supported any proposal advocating national independence. On this question of the British

connection, he has been adamantine; he has not hesitated to condemn the Congress resolution as thoughtless. His non-co-operation movement has been a source of the greatest anxiety to the British Government; but they always had the feeling that the great leader of the movement had no thought of severing the British connection itself. Mahatma Gandhi's policy has sometimes been attacked by critics as lacking in the essential element of statesmanship, one of the marks of which is a just appreciation of realities; but so far as the question of the political goal of India is concerned, no such criticism can justly be levelled against him. On that question, he has shown a sense of reality which is in striking contrast with its utter lack in some features of his policy and programme. On the other hand, critics of the Extremist type consider this as one of his limitations, and contrast it with the attitude of the great Egyptian leader, Zaghlul Pasha, who at once demanded national independence for his country as soon as the Armistice was signed.

III

The successful boycott of the Prince's visit and the adoption by the Indian National Congress of the resolution in favour of civil disobedience stiffened the attitude of the Conservatives in England, who began to demand strong action against Mahatma Gandhi and the non-co-operation movement. In India itself, moderate opinion was somewhat alienated by Mahatma Gandhi's attitude with regard to the proposed

Round Table Conference, and also alarmed by the prospect of mass civil disobedience. The President of the National Liberal Federation held at Allahabad, only two days after the Congress, blamed Mahatma Gandhi for setting his face against the Conference, and declared that "his attitude will go a great way towards alienating the sympathies of those not already committed to non-co-operation, and the duty will be largely recognised and acted upon, on the part of the people to uphold peace and order." And the Federation itself strongly condemned the adoption of mass civil disobedience as fraught with the gravest danger to the real interests of the country, and as calculated to retard the attainment of *Swaraj*. It was not only the Liberals or Moderates that condemned the step which Mahatma Gandhi intended to take; it was also condemned by Dr. Annie Besant and her followers who could hardly be called moderates, and whose work in connection with the Home Rule campaign had brought on their devoted heads the wrath of the Government in the days before the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Some Congressmen, too, were getting uneasy over the possible consequences of mass Civil Disobedience and thought that it should not be resorted to, until it was clear beyond doubt that no other means would secure a redress of the country's grievances and the status of full responsible Government. A fresh attempt was made by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mr. Jinnah and others to bring about a settlement by means of a Round Table Conference; and, as a preliminary to it,

a Conference of all parties was held at Bombay on the 14th January 1922, which voted against civil disobedience except as a last resort, urged the calling of a Round Table Conference between the Government and popular representatives, and suggested that His Majesty's Government should clothe the Viceroy with the necessary authority for the purpose of arriving at a settlement at the Conference. Mahatma Gandhi attended this All-Parties' Conference, expressed himself quite in sympathy with its objects, but declined to take part in its deliberations or to vote on the resolutions proposed. He agreed, however, to postpone civil disobedience, until it was known what response the Viceroy gave to the request for a Round Table Conference. The Viceroy's reply was not satisfactory; and, in the meanwhile, Mahatma Gandhi wrote a letter to Lord Reading, declaring his intention to start civil disobedience at Bardoli, a town in Gujerat. Thus, all efforts of the peacemakers to bring about a peaceful settlement proved abortive.

The European community in India called for a policy of blood and iron to put down the non-co-operation movement. They condemned the Government for what they considered their "attitude of supine acquiescence with lawlessness and incipient anarchy", and called upon them to set the law in motion against the non-co-operation movement. On 9th February 1922, the Government of India published their correspondence with the Secretary of State on the situation in India, in which they had defended themselves

against any charge of supineness in dealing with Mahatma Gandhi and his movement.

"It is", they said in the course of the correspondence, "with the co-operation of the people of India that British rule in India hitherto has been carried on, and it is essential for its continued success that there should be such co-operation. It has therefore been regarded by the Government of India as of the utmost consequence that they should carry with them, so far as practicable, in any measure that they took against the non-co-operation movement, the approval and acquiescence of Indian opinion. Evidence is given by the recent debates in the Indian Legislature that in this they have been largely successful."

On 1st February 1922, as has been already stated, Mahatma Gandhi gave an ultimatum to the Viceroy, reiterating the conditions on which he was prepared to suspend civil disobedience, and, declaring, that, if Lord Reading failed to make a satisfactory response within seven days, he would start mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, " in order to mark the National revolt against the Government for its consistently criminal refusal to appreciate India's resolve regarding the Khilafat, the Panjaub and Swaraj." He charged the Government with breach of faith in having departed from the policy laid down by the Viceroy at the time of the apology of the Ali brothers, viz., that the Government would not interfere with the activities of Non-co-operation as long as they remained non-violent in word and deed.

This ultimatum evoked an immediate reply from the Government. They rebutted the charge of breach of faith, and declared their intention to meet mass civil disobedience with sternness and severity, in full confi-

dence that in any measures they might have to take for its suppression, they would receive the support and assistance of all law-abiding, loyal citizens.

In the meanwhile, preparations were in full swing for the starting of civil disobedience at Bardoli. Mahatma Gandhi himself settled down at the town to lead the campaign in person. Both the contending forces were ready for battle, when Mahatma Gandhi's plans were suddenly upset by a terrible outrage which occurred at Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces on the 4th of February, 1922. A mob of 3,000 men led by hundreds of Congress volunteers deliberately murdered and burnt to death all the police, about 22 in number, in the station of Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur District, simply because an over-zealous Police officer had, two or three days before, beaten some volunteers, while they were engaged in peaceful picketting of shops dealing in foreign cloth. There was also another outbreak at Bareilly, which was, however, soon suppressed by armed police before any serious harm was done. These outrages produced a revulsion of feeling, and about fifty prominent leaders of the United Provinces issued a manifesto strongly condemning the conduct of the volunteers. Mahatma Gandhi took counsel with his friends at Bombay, and at once resolved to suspend the projected civil disobedience at Bardoli. At an emergent meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress, held on 11th February, he went so far as to advise Congress organisations to stop all activities designed to court arrest and imprisonment,

as also all volunteer processions and public meetings designed to defy the notifications prohibiting them. In short, he practically advised the cessation of all activities that had been carried on by the Congress organisations with such fervour and zest during the past few months. The Working Committee acted on his advice; but when the All-India Congress Committee met at Delhi a few days later, his sudden suspension of civil disobedience, and of the general programme of the Congress hitherto pursued, raised a storm of opposition; and there were clear indications that his political leadership did not inspire the same confidence as before. Many considered the sudden abandonment of the Bardoli campaign as a political blunder: they thought that it was, in fact, an unconscious blow given to the non-co-operation movement by Mahatma Gandhi himself. Referring to this action of Mahatma Gandhi, his French admirer, Romain Rolland, while thoroughly appreciating its moral value, justly remarks: "It is dangerous to assemble all the forces of a nation, and to hold the nation, panting, before a prescribed movement, to lift one's arm to give the final command, and then, at the last moment, let one's arm drop, and thrice call a halt just as the formidable machinery has been set in motion. One risks running the brakes and paralysing the impetus." This quite aptly describes what many of Mahatma Gandhi's own followers thought and felt about the sudden orders to retreat given by him. Those, particularly in the Deccan and Central Provinces

who never agreed with him entirely in his programme of non-co-operation, or shared his religious faith in non-violence, began more and more to raise their voice against his leadership, saying that either he ought not to have resolved upon starting civil disobedience at all, or if he did so after full and mature consideration, should not have swerved from the path deliberately chosen, simply because disturbances, which could hardly be avoided in a vast national movement like this, broke out at some places. They contrasted his methods with those of their great hero, Lokamanya Tilak, who never advanced too far, never faltered, and never retreated.

Lord Reading, with his characterestic shrewdness, now saw that his opportunity had come. He rightly concluded that there was " a favourable atmosphere " for taking the step which he and his Government had long since contemplated. On the 1st of March 1922, he ordered the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, and, in the evening of 10th March, this great and remarkable man and leader was arrested in his *Sabarmati* Ashram at Ahmedabad, under orders of the Government of Bombay, for sedition under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code. The arrest which had been postponed from time to time for fear of an outbreak of violence throughout India, when it came at last, caused not the slightest ripple of disturbance over the vast ocean of Indian humanity. It cannot be said that the people had, within a few days, suddenly assimilated the great teaching of non-violence on which he had always

insisted. They were stunned and paralysed, not indeed, by the arrest itself, but by the unexpected turn events had taken.

The official chronicler, Mr. Rushbrook Williams, writes :—

"This step (i.e. the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi) had long been contemplated, but had been postponed from time to time for various reasons. In the first place, there was a natural reluctance to incarcerate a man who, however mistaken might be his activities, was by all widely respected, and by millions revered as a saint. Moreover, he had consistently preached the gospel of non-violence, and done all that he could to restrain the more impatient of his followers from embarking upon forcible methods. It was further impossible to ignore the fact that until a substantial body of Indian opinion was prepared to support measures against Mr. Gandhi's person, and until the popular belief in his divine inspiration had been weakened by the efflux of time, there was reason to fear that his arrest would have been attended with bloody outbreaks in numerous places, by the intensification of racial bitterness, and by the creation of conditions in which the new constitution would have little or no chance of success. That the arrest, being well-timed, passed off peacefully, should not mislead the reader into thinking that it could have been effected with equal absence of popular excitement at an earlier period. It came when Mr. Gandhi's political reputation was at its nadir; when the enthusiasm of his followers had reached the lowest ebb; when the public mind of India was engrossed with other issues".

This historic trial took place on 18th March 1922, at Ahmedabad, before Mr. Broomfield, Sessions Judge. Mahatma Gandhi pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 6 years' simple imprisonment. He made a statement in which he explained why he

had turned from a staunch loyalist and co-operator into an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. "I came reluctantly to the conclusion," he said

"that the British connection had made India more helpless than she was ever before, politically and economically. India is less manly under British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system, and it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have written in the various articles tendered in evidence against me."

Thus, the voice of the great apostle and leader of non-co-operation was hushed for a time. After his incarceration, the unity among the non-co-operationists was broken, and there was a growing movement for lifting the boycott of the Councils and for carrying on the struggle for *Swaraj* within the legislatures themselves. But though, apparently, the non-co-operation movement collapsed, the national longing for Swaraj remained as wide-spread, deep and intense as ever before. The form may change but the spirit abideth for ever.

CHAPTER XII

THE STRUGGLE FOR SWARAJ IN THE LEGISLATURES

I

THE Liberals and others, who did not countenance the non-co-operation movement and entered the new legislatures were, from the first, determined to work the reforms so as to promote the cause of *Swaraj*. Their policy, in this respect, was, in fact, the same as that of the late Mr. Tilak who had, as we have seen, advocated the use of the reforms for accelerating the grant of full responsible government. In two ways, did they seek to promote the cause of constitutional advance. In the first place, by administering the transferred departments with ability and efficiency, they vindicated the right of India to *Swaraj*; and, secondly, they made, particularly, in the Indian legislature, demands for further extension of political power. The ministries of the provincial Governments, composed, in many cases, of Liberals, initiated new policies in consonance with the views and the will of the electorates; and they displayed great capacity for executive government, by the vigour and efficiency with which they administered the departments transferred to popular control. And, further, they showed a correct and high conception of constitutional popular govern-

ment, when, owing to what they considered improper or unconstitutional action on the part of the Governor, they thought it their clear duty to resign their offices. Mr. Chintamani and Mr. Jagat Narain, Ministers of the Government of the United Provinces, at once tendered resignation of their offices, when they considered that the Governor had not dealt fairly with them.

The Legislative Assembly was the principal arena for carrying on the struggle for *Swaraj*, by means of repeated demands for the speedy attainment of full responsible government. The first battle was given in the very first year of the reformed constitution. In September 1921, Rai Bahadur Majumdar urged the establishment of full provincial responsible government in 1924, the transfer of all central departments, except Defence, and Foreign and Political Relations, to popular control in the same year, and the establishment of full Dominion Status in 1930. The Government, though they opposed his motion, ultimately agreed to convey to the Secretary of State for India the view of the Assembly that the progress made by India on the path of responsible government warranted a revision of the constitution before the expiry of the prescribed decennial period.

In 1922, Mr. Lloyd George, who then occupied the responsible position of the Prime Minister of Great Britain, made a speech in which he described the British Civil Service in India as the "steel frame" of the administration, and, with his characteristic habit of making extreme statements, declared that, whatever

changes might be made in the Indian Constitution, it would never be deprived of its functions and privileges. The Legislative Assembly condemned this speech as being in conflict with the policy embodied in the Declaration of 20th August 1917, and, subsequently, in the Reforms, and, as such, naturally giving rise to serious misgivings as to the real intention of the British Government regarding the establishment of full responsible government in India.

After the imprisonment of Mr. Gandhi, an important development took place in the strategy of the movement for *Swaraj*. A new party arose, called the *Swaraj* party, which, realizing vividly the failure of the triple boycott which formed an essential part of the original programme of non-co-operation, and, also, the ineffectiveness of the new programme formulated after the suspension of civil disobedience, for attaining *Swaraj*, whatever social and moral value it might have, in itself, advocated the removal of the ban against the Councils, and aimed at waging the war for freedom on the battlefields of the legislatures themselves. It was formed and organised by Pandit Motilal Nehru and the late Mr. Das, two remarkable men, who showed great ability and organising skill in making it a popular and powerful organisation. In a manifesto issued in October 1923, they declared that, on entering the legislative Assembly, the first duty of the party would be to demand that the right of the Indian people to control the machinery and system of Government should at once be con-

ceded and given effect to by the British Government and the British Parliament.

"If the right itself", the manifesto said, "is conceded, it will be a matter for negotiation between the Government and the Nationalist members in the Assembly, as to the manner in which the right is to be given effect to. But in the event of the Government refusing to entertain the demand, or, after agreeing to do so, offering terms which are not acceptable, it shall be the duty of the members of the party elected to the Assembly and the Provincial Councils, if they constitute a majority, to resort to a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction, with a view to make Government through the Assembly and the Councils impossible."

The *Swaraj* party fought the elections held in 1923 on this programme, and, on the whole, won notable successes. Except in the Legislative Council of the Central Provinces, it did not, indeed, obtain a clear majority; but, with the co-operation, complete or partial, of other parties, it won a dominant position in the Legislative Assembly and in the Bengal Council. In the province of Bombay and in the United Provinces, also, its influence was great, and at times, decisive.

With the entry of the Swaraj party into the Assembly and the Councils, the struggle for *Swaraj* was carried on, within the legislatures, with increased strength and militancy. At the instance of Pandit Motilal Nehru, the leader of the party, the Legislative Assembly passed, in February 1924, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution urging that steps should be taken to have the Government of India Act revised with a view to establish full responsible government

in India, and, for that purpose, to summon, at an early date, a representative Round Table Conference to recommend, with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, a scheme of constitution for India, and, after dissolving the Central Legislature, to place it before the newly elected Indian Legislature for its approval, and to submit it to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute. This resolution was a most unmistakable and emphatic expression of the Assembly's will as regards constitutional advance, and constituted the national demand as voiced by the Indian Parliament.

This national demand was summarily rejected by the Labour Government that had, in the meanwhile, in January 1924, come into office. Lord Olivier, the Labour Indian Secretary, considered it an entire departure from the principles laid down in the Goverment of India Act, and expressed the view of the Government, that "unless the Parliamentary system is welded together by predominant common interests from its foundation in the electorate upwards, no theoretical constitution that may be arrived at by a concordat among leaders of divergent interests for the mere purpose of establishing an ostensibly democratic form, can prevent it from flying asunder." This unsympathetic attitude of the Labour Government caused great disappointment and destroyed India's faith in the Labour Party. Hitherto, Indian opinion, in general, had expected that the Labour Party, when it became responsible for the Government of the British Empire,

would do big things; and, although it realized that the Party was only in office and not in power, it was not prepared for such a summary and offhand refusal of the national demand. It had expected at least greater sympathy and consideration; but the action of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Government in vetoing the demand without exploring avenues of possible understanding between the Government and the Legislative Assembly made the people of India feel that, after all, when the question of Indian *Swaraj* was concerned, there was little to choose between one British Party and another. No doubt, the difficulties of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Government were great; but, surely, he could have shown a more sympathetic spirit in dealing with the Assembly's demand. Such was the universal feeling with which the Legislative Assembly and the Indian people received Lord Olivier's statement, unceremoniously brushing aside the considered, unanimous demand of the elected representatives of the Indian people.

The action of the Labour Government in rejecting the Assembly's demand stiffened its attitude, and led to an open constitutional conflict between the Legislature and the Executive. The Assembly, acting on the principle, "No redress of grievances, no supplies", rejected four important demands for grants, and, also, the Finance Bill. The Viceroy appealed to the Assembly to pass the Bill which was submitted for its re-consideration; but the Assembly remained firm, and it was again thrown out. Thus, the Assembly

employed the weapon which had been used by the British House of Commons in its struggle with the Crown. But as the Assembly's demand had no powerful sanction behind it, except such moral sanction as could be derived from the force of public opinion, and from the inherent justice of its cause, the weapon proved ineffective ; and the Viceroy, in opposition to the will of his Parliament, provided the administration with the necessary funds by certifying the demands and the Bill. Nevertheless, the constitutional conflict, ineffective as it was, had its own educative and moral value.

III

The urge for immediate constitutional advance did not, however, leave the Government quite unmoved. They appointed a committee to inquire into the working of the Reforms and to suggest what changes could be made without substantially modifying the existing constitution or altering its structure. The report of the committee was not unanimous. The majority report proposed such trifling changes that it excited ridicule rather than serious consideration. The minority expressed its clear conviction that the constitution should be revised and placed on a permanent basis, with provisions for automatic progress, so that the stability of the Government and the willing co-operation of the people might be secured. In the Simla Session of 1925, the Legislative Assembly expressed its disapproval of the re-

port of the Committee, and, again, passed a resolution reiterating, in a more elaborate form, the national demand formulated in the previous year. That resolution demanded from the British Government a declaration in Parliament of the following fundamental changes in the constitutional machinery and administration of India, viz:—

(a) The revenues of British India, hitherto vested in His Majesty, shall henceforth be vested in the Governor-General-in-Council for the purposes of government of India.

(b) The Governor-General-in-Council shall be responsible to the Indian Legislature, and, subject to such responsibility, shall have power to control the expenditure of the revenues of India, except the following, which shall, for a fixed term of years, remain under the control of the Secretary of State for India; (1) expenditure of the Military Services up to a fixed limit, (2) expenditure classed as political and foreign, (3) payment of debts and liabilities.

(c) The Council of India shall be abolished, and the position of the Secretary of State for India shall be assimilated to that of the Secretary of State for the Dominions, except with regard to the military and other expenditure mentioned in clause (b).

(d) The Indian Army shall be nationalised within a short and definite period of time, and Indians shall be admitted for service in all arms of defence, and, for that purpose, the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief shall be assisted by a minister responsible to the Assembly.

(e) The Central and Provincial Legislatures shall consist entirely of members elected by constituencies formed on as wide a franchise as possible.

(f) The principle of responsibility to the legislature shall be introduced in all the branches of the administration of the Central Government, subject to transitional reservation and residuary powers in the Governor-General in

respect of the control of the military, and foregin and politieal affairs for a fixed term of years, provided that, during the period, the proposals of the Governor-General-in-Council for expenditure on Defence shall be submitted to the vote of the Legislature, but that the Governor-General-in Council shall have power, notwithstanding the vote of the Assembly, to appropriate, upto a fixed maximum, any sum he may consider necessary for such expenditure, and, in the event of a war, to authorise such expenditure as may be considered necessary exceeding the maximum fixed.

(*g*) The present system of dyarchy in the Provinces shall be abolished, and replaced by unitary, autonomous responsible governments, subject to the general control and residuary powers of the Central Government in inter-provincial and all-India matters.

(*h*) The Indian Legislature, after the expiry of a fixed term of years referred to in clauses (b) and (f), shall have full power to amend the constitution.

The resolution also urged that the Government should take steps to constitute a convention, Round Table Conference or other suitable agency, adequately representative of all-Indian, European and Anglo-Indian interests to frame, with due regard to the interests of minorities, a detailed scheme based on the above principles, the scheme to be subsequently submitted to the Assembly for approval and to the British Parliament to be embodied in a Statute.

Pandit Motilal, in making this motion, told the Government that the present system of Government could only be maintained by military power. Lord Birkenhead, the new Secretary of State had, he said, asked for co-operation, but he and his party would not co-operate, unless the Government showed a change of heart. " The history of the Reforms" he added, "as it developes, will furnish the

brightest chapter in the chequered history of this land. The struggle for reform, once begun, must sooner or later have its appointed end, which is no other than the achievement of the fullest freedom. It remains to be seen whether England will share the credit of the achievement by willingly giving a helping hand, or suffer that the achievement be wrested from her unwilling hands."

In the Council of State, India's Second Chamber, the same demand was made by the Hon. Sir (then Mr.) P. C. Sethna, an able and highly respected Parsi leader of Bombay; but that conservative body rejected it. The Council's action in opposing the national demand was deeply resented by the Legislative Assembly and the general public; and some people began to express the view, that if India's Senate stood in the way of her progress, it had better be ended altogether.

Thus the elected representatives of the people in the Legislative Assembly carried on the struggle for Swaraj. Its resolution was, in fact, marked by such a spirit of moderation and reasonableness that the Government should have had no difficulty in giving it a sympathetic consideration. At all events, if they had been inspired by the least desire to meet the Legislative Assembly half way, it would not have been impossible to arrive at an understanding between the two parties. But the Government were, apparently, bent upon undermining the influence of the Swarajist party, before they took any action to meet the

desire of the Indian people for constitutional progress. Both the Secretary of State and the Viceroy again and again repeated the call for co-operation, evidently hoping that they would succeed in bending the Swarajist party to their own will, and in compelling the Indian people to accept the fundamental principles underlying the Declaration of August 20, 1917, and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. The Swarajists did not fail to realize this inwardness of the attitude of the Government, and modified their tactics so far as to extend co-operation to the Government in enacting beneficial legislation, without, at the same time, abandoning their essential principles and policy. Thus, it was the game of two opposite policies being skilfully played by two parties. The policy of the Government in weakening the Swarajist forces was not quite unsuccessful. Seeing that the original policy of uniform, continuous and wholesale obstruction could not be consistently followed owing to the party not being in a clear majority of its own, some Swarajists lost patience, and, seceding from its ranks, formed a new party called 'The Responsivist Party,' with practically the same policy and programme, as those of the late Mr. Tilak's 'Democratic Party.' Some confusion and demoralisation in the Swarajist Party had already taken place, owing to Mr. Patel, a leading Swarajist, having sought —and successfully sought—election to the Chair of the Assembly, and to another Swarajist in the Central Provinces, Mr. Tambe, having accepted the office of a member of the Executive Council. The premature

death of Mr. C. R. Das had also weakened the position of the party in Bengal.

Such were the disheartening circumstances in which Pandit Motilal Nehru had to keep up the fight. On the one hand, his position was not so strong as before; on the other, the Government, knowing that their policy was becoming more and more successful, was obdurate. Nevertheless, nothing daunted, he gave an open challenge to the Government. On 8th March 1926, he made in the Legislative Assembly a statement virtually arraigning them before the bar of Indian public, and international, opinion. He declared that his party would work among the electorates, organise the popular forces for the final struggle, and return to the Assembly in increased strength to carry on the fight to a successful issue. He then walked out of the Assembly Chamber with his followers as a protest against the contemptuous treatment meted out to India by Great Britain, whose sole aim was to prolong her subjection as much as possible, in order that thereby she might serve her own selfish ends. The Swaraj Party continued the protest during the Simla Session of 1926 by abstaining from attending it.

The other parties were thus deprived of the driving force and co-operation of the Swarajists. Nevertheless, they carried on the constitutional struggle as best as they could. Mr. Jinnah raised the constitutional issue by moving the rejection of the

demand for allowances to members of the Executive Council. The motion was, however, rejected.

In the Council of State, another battle was unsuccessfully fought on 18th February 1926. The Hon. Sir P. C. Sethna moved a resolution urging the appointment of a Royal Commission to formulate a scheme for the establishment of responsible Government in India. In a closely reasoned and persuasive speech, he stressed the fact that the demand for immediate cnnstitutional advance was universal, and he made a fervent appeal to Great Britain that, great and powerful as she was, she might well stoop to conquer the heart of India, by magnanimously satisfying her ardent longing for self-government. The appeal was lost on the Government, and the resolution was rejected.

IV

Let us now turn to the struggle for *Swaraj* as carried on in the Provincial Councils. We have already stated that, in the elections of 1923, the Swaraj party won a clear majority in the Central Provinces Legislative Council. In the Bengal Legislative Council, Mr. Das, the leader of the party, succeeded in forming a coalition with many Muslim members, which gave it a commanding position in the Legislature. But, in other Councils also, individual members, not necessarily Swarajists, sought to promote the cause of constitutional advance, without adopting Swarajist methods. They were, however,

very much handicapped in their struggle by technical difficulties, arising from Legislative Council Rules, which empowered the Governor to veto any motion relating to a matter which was not primarily the concern of the local Government. Resolutions advocating constitutional reform, though allowed by the President of the Council, were unceremoniously vetoed by the Governor. The present writer, as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council since 1924, tabled, at most sessions, a resolution urging constitutional advance; but, every time, his resolution, though allowed by the President, was disallowed by the Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson.

All the Councils, before which the report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee came up for consideration, rejected it. And the Council of the minor province of Assam, as early as in April 1924, adopted a resolution urging that immediate steps should be taken to establish full responsible government in the province.

But, so far as the Provincial Councils were concerned, the interest of the struggle for *Swaraj* lay in those of the Central Provinces and Bengal. The *Swaraj* party's policy was to make the working of the dyarchical constitution impossible, and, in both these councils, this policy proved successful, so long as the Swarajists continued to occupy a dominant position. The Council of the Central Provinces rejected the Budget, passed a motion of 'no confidence' in the ministry, and, on finding that the ministers continued

to hold office in spite of the motion, sanctioned the ridiculous amount of Rs. 2 PER ANNUM as their salary. As a result, the ministers resigned, and the administration of the transferred departments was taken over by the Governor. Dr. Moonje, who was then a member of the Council and is now a member of the Legislative Assembly, presented to the President of the Council, a communication to be sent to the Secretary of State, urging that the only just and proper solution of the constitutional crisis in the province, that would result in mutual advantage, peace and contentment, lay "in granting the right of self-determination to the people of India, and the early mending of the Government of India Act, to embody the constitution which the people of India themselves shall have framed." The communication was read in the Council, but the President ruled it out of order, and refused to forward it to the Government.

In Bengal, also, the Swarajists succeeded in destroying dyarchy. They refused the demand for ministers' salaries on three successive occasions. The situation in Bengal was aggravated by the promulgation by the Government of a drastic ordinance to put down the anarchical and revolutionary movement, which the Swarjists considered, as being aimed also at their movement. The suspicions of the *Swaraj* Party were confirmed by the fact, that three of its prominent members, two of whom were members of the Bengal Legislative Council, were arrested under the Ordinance. The Governor tried his

best to persuade the leading members of the Council to agree to the smooth working of ministerial government; but all his efforts were of no avail. On 28th February 1924, Mr. Das declared in a statement that his party would maintain their opposition to the formation of a ministry, unless and until "the present system of Government is altered, or there is a settlement between the Government and the people of this province based on a real change of heart, without which there can be no guarantee for complete self-government."

The conflict between the Government and the Council over this question of the constitution of a ministry, went on for a long time. But ultimately the Government had to own defeat, and, on 13th June 1925, they announced that dyarchy had been abolished for the time being and the administration of the transferred subjects taken over by the Governor. Thus, in the Bengal and the Central Provinces, the representatives of the people made it clear by making it impossible for dyarchy to function, that a system of Government, more in consonance with the national will, must be established. The policy of the Swaraj party may not receive general approval; it may not have succeeded in bringing the Government to a standstill; but, as an expression of India's will to attain *Swaraj*, it is impossible to mistake or underrate its significance.

V

After the Delhi Session of 1925 of the Legislative Assembly, there was a lull in the agitation for

Swaraj in the Legislatures, until, again, the appointment of the Statutory Commission in November, 1927, united the different political parties, and led to its revival in a more vigorous form. This lull was due to several causes. In the triennial elections of 1926, the Swarajists were successful in maintaining their position ; but they were not returned in such numbers as to be able to carry out their policy of paralysing the administration. The formation of a new party, called the Responsivist Party by Mr. Kelkar, Mr. Jayakar, Dr. Moonje and other Mahratta leaders to whom the policy of the late Mr. Tilak had always had an irresistible appeal, and who had never thought that in the peculiar conditions of India, the *Swarajist* policy would be successful, weakened the strength of the Swarajist Party. Ministries were formed and began to function both in Bengal and the Central Province. The Government maintained, at least outwardly, their attitude of indifference to the insistent demand for constitutional advance, though, it would seem, they now began seriously to consider the question of the acceleration of the date for the revision of the constitution, and confidential correspondence on the subject, went on between Whitehall and Simla. Probably, they, too, realized that the existing transitional constitution must soon be replaced by another system. But, of course, the traditional and characteristic secrecy of the Indian Government was scrupulously maintained ; no indication at all was given that the question of the revision of the constitution had begun to engage their

thoughts and the general impression among the the Indian people was that the Government would take no action until the expiry of the statutory period for the appointment of a Commission to investigate the problem of the Indian Constitution. But the greatest cause that discouraged Indian political leaders, and checked the progress of the struggle for *Swaraj*, was that the Hindu-Muslim unity that Mr. Gandhi had spared no efforts to bring about, broke down, and the relations between the two communities became more and more embittered. This growing antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims, and the numerous disturbances in which it manifested itself, constitute a very dark and inglorious chapter in the annals of modern India. They saddened the hearts of all those Indian leaders and patriots whose great aim had always been to build up a strong and democratic Indian nationalism upon the unbreakable unity of the two great communities of India. So sad and humiliating did the situation become that Mr. Gandhi, who had been released in 1924, observed a fast of three weeks, with the hope that his self-mortification would conduce to a better understanding between the two communities; and a unity conference was also held at Delhi to consider the measures that should be adopted to prevent communal disturbances. The best leaders on both sides, who were free from any taint of communalism, did their best to restore good feeling between the two communities. But the tide of communalism rose so high that all these efforts were in vain, and outbreaks

of communal fury continued to disturb and distract the life of the country. With the failure of the Khilafat movement, owing to the policy of rational modernization vigorously and unflinchingly pursued by Kemal Pasha, the urge for Hindu-Muslim unity, in the minds of those Muslims whose patriotism had been subordinated to the spirit of Pan-Islamism, and who had thought that, with the revival of Pan-Islamism and its increased strength, the position of Muslims in India would always be strong, whatever might be the attitude of the British Government towards them, and whatever changes might be made in the Indian constitution, became weak; and they began to feel that unless their position was specially safe-guarded, they would have to go under, and would always be dominated by the major Hindu Community. With the sudden appearance or reappearance of this feeling of fear, coupled with the frustration of all their hopes as regards the revival of the Pan-Islamic movement, the less nationalist and more fanatical Moslems began to manifest the communal spirit in an increasingly intensive form. Considerable sections of Hindus, on the other hand, began to feel that a little delay in the attainment of *Swaraj* was preferable to its immediate or speedy achievement, in case such achievement could not be brought about, except by recognising claims and pretensions on the part of Moslems which were clearly excessive, unreasonable, and calculated to retard the growth of true nationalism. Thus, on both sides, the realisation of the necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity as

an essential condition of Indian Swaraj and progress lost that transcendent and vivid character which it had attained during the hey-day of the non-co-operation movement. And when some Hindus began to express the view that the Hindu-Moslem problem could not be satisfactorily solved except by a political synthesis based on a common electoral roll, Moslem nervousness and suspicion and communalism were further aggravated by what they considered a peril to their existing position. Thus, the situation became acute and was still more worsened by the formation of communal organisations which tended to be aggressive and militant, though their avowed aim was to protect and promote what were considered the legitimate interests of the communities concerned.

The growing ill-feeling between the Hindus and the Moslems naturally acted as a damper on the movement for Swaraj. In the Budget Session of the Legislative Assembly for the year 1927, Mr. Jayakar, indeed, again raised the constitutional issue by moving the rejection of the demand for the expenses of the Governor-General's Executive Council. The motion was carried, but failed to receive the same solid support as before from Moslem members, and the debate showed that the embittered relations between the Hindus and the Moslems had considerably weakened the strength of the Nationalist parties. The communal problem was proving a most disturbing factor, and those Moslem members who wanted the

system of communal electorates to continue, refused to extend to the Swarajist and other nationalist parties in the Legislature the same cordial co-operation in the movement for Swaraj, as they had done before. The progressive political parties seemed to think that Swaraj with communal electorates would not be so desirable; on the other hand, many Moslem leaders insisted that if such electorates were abolished, they would be so much at the mercy of the Hindu majority that, so far as the Moslem community was concerned, Swaraj without communal representation would not be worth having. Such was the development which suddenly took place in Indian politics; and while this development had weakened popular forces and led to a comparative lull in the agitation for *Swaraj*, the Government thought that the right moment had come for undertaking an inquiry into the problem of the revision of the constitution; and in November 1927, they announced the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission to investigate and report on the question. To what extent, they were influenced in choosing the precise date for the appointment of the Commision, by the turn given to Indian politics by the revival and growth of communalism in the country, only the confidential correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy can show.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BOYCOTT OF THE SIMON COMMISSION

SECTION 84-A of the Government of India Act provides that at the expiration of ten years from the passing of the Act, a Commission should be appointed to inquire into the system of Government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions in British India, and matters connected therewith, and to report as to whether and to what extent, it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible Government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible Government already existing, including the question whether the establishment of Second Chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable.

Moderate Indian opinion had often urged the acceleration of the date of the Commission, but every time the Government had opposed the demand on the ground that there had been no favourable atmosphere for the inquiry, owing to the more influential political parties having refused to extend co-operation in working the reforms. The movement for Swaraj had moreover, received a serious set-back from the sudden emergence, in an extremely acute form, of the Hindu-Moslem problem. India had almost ceased to think of constitutional reform, when the

British Government announced their intention to appoint the Statutory Commission. Lord Birkenhead, who had at one time expressed the view that the problem of Indian constitutional reform was so important that the Commission ought to consist of the best brains of the Empire, succeeded in persuading the Cabinet and the two Opposition Parties, the Liberal and the Labour, to the appointment of a purely Parliamentary Commission, presided over by Sir John Simon, on which no Indian was appointed.

The exclusion of Indians from the Commission raised a storm of indignation throughout the length and breadth of India. The Swarajists, the Responsivists, the Liberals, a large section of Moslems, the Independents—all joined in condemning it, as an affront to India, and a grave political blunder on the part of Lord Birkenhead and the British Government. Would it be right for India to quietly submit to the humiliation and take the insult lying down? That was clearly impossible. The Liberals, who had kept aloof from the Non-co-operation movement and sincerely co-operated with the Government in working the reforms, thereby incurring the odium of their own countrymen, regarded the entire scheme of the Commission, not only as derogatory to India's national self-respect, as denying to her, her legitimate right to participate with England, on equal terms, in the framing of her own constitution, but as an utter violation of the real spirit and policy of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. They at once took up a strong attitude and declared that

the only right course for India was to boycott the Commission. The suggestion made an irresistible appeal to most leaders and the general public, and, though dissentient voices were not lacking, the movement for the boycott of the Commission gathered increasing volume and strength. Manifestoes were issued strongly condemning the Commission, and appealing to all political parties to leave it severely alone, and have nothing to do with it, at any stage or in any form. The following typical manifesto issued by Dr. Annie Besant, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Shrinivas Ayengar, Mrs. Dorothy Jinarajadasa, Mrs. Margaret E. Cousins and many others, fully reflects the general feeling aroused by the action of the Government in constituting the Commission :—

"India was appealed to during the Great War to fight in it on the cry of self-determination. This was declared by Mr. Lloyd George to be applicable to tropical countries. A million Indians died outside India in defence of this principle, trusting in the word of Britain pledged by her Prime Minister. Now that Britain is safe for the time from aggression, she breaks her pledged faith with India, and demands that India shall confide her immediate destiny into the hands of a Parliamentary Commission, which wounds her self-respect. India will refuse We reject the Commission. We will have with it now or hereafter. As Parliamen boycott the Parliamentary Commission."

Another manifesto, issued in t the most prominent and influential including some who had held high of the Executive Councils of t

India or of Provincial Governments, declared as follows :—

We have come to the deliberate conclusion that the exclusion of Indians from the Commission is fundamentally wrong, and that the proposals about Committees of Legislatures being allowed to submit their views to the Commission, and, later, to confer with the Joint Parliamentary Committee, are wholly inadequate to meet the requirements of the case. The underlying principle of the scheme, that Indians are to have no authoritative voice in the collection of proper materials and evidence or in the taking of decisions by way of recommendations of the Commission to Parliament is of such a character that India cannot, with any self-respect, acquiesce in it. Unless a Commission on which the British and Indian statesmen are invited to sit on equal terms, is set up, we cannot conscientiously take any part or share in the work of the Commission as at present constituted.

These manifestoes were followed by public meetings all over the country at which resolutions were adopted, condemning the Commission and supporting the proposal to boycott it.

A Bill was passed in Parliament legalising the appointment of the Commission before the expiry of the prescribed period. Lord Birkenhead in the House of Lords, and Earl Winterton in the House of Commons, moved resolutions asking the Houses of Parliament to approve of the *personnel* of the Commission. The proposals of the Government received the fullest support of the Liberal and Labour Parties; they had, in fact, been framed in consultation with their leaders. Very ingenious arguments were advanced in support of the decision of the Government to appoint a purely

Parliamentary Commission, though not the least attempt was made to show why the late Lord Sinha was not appointed; it was plausibly argued that the scheme proposed was, in fact, better than the appointment of a few Indians on the Commission. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the leader of the Labour Party, in particular, made an earnest appeal to Indian political leaders to accept it, and to give up their intention to boycott the Commission.

This elaborate defence of the proposals of the Government failed to convince Indian opinion of their justice or wisdom, and the only effect it produced upon Indian leaders was to stiffen their attitude and strengthen their determination to boycott the Commission. Surprise was expressed at the attitude taken up by the Labour leaders, and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Lord Olivier were bitterly attacked for having betrayed the cause of India. India's faith in the Labour Party received a severe blow.

The movement, thus started for boycotting the Commission, received the sanction of most of the political and quasi-political Conferences that met during the Christmas week. The National Congress, the All-India Moslem League, the Liberal Federation, the Khilafat Conference, the Industrial Conference, the Hindu Mahasabha—all strongly condemned the Commission, and supported the boycott. A minority among the Mahomedans, under the leadership of Sir Shafi, an ex-member of the Viceroy's Executive Council,

held a separate conference, and resolved to co-operate with the Commission ; but this conference was disowned by the principal body—the All-India Moslem League—which held its sitting at Calcutta, and gave its fullest suport to the boycott movement. The Indian Christian Conference, which represents the Indian Christian Community, considered, indeed, that the policy of boycott might seriously prejudice the best interests of India ; but it also condemned the non-inclusion of Indians on the Commission.

The Indian National Congress not only sanctioned the boycott but also devised measures to make it effective. It directed Congress organisations to organise mass demonstrations on the day of the arrival of the Commission in India, and similar demonstrations in the various cities of India which the Commission might visit. It appealed to members of legislatures not to elect their own committees to co-operate with the Commission, or to assist the inquiry in any form or manner. They were also asked to reject any demand for grant that might be made in connection with the work of the Commission. Side by side with this political boycott, social boycott was also enjoined, so that the members of the Commission might have no opportunity whatever of exchanging views with Indian leaders of opinion or others, on questions with which they had to deal. Complete and rigid boycott, both political and social, was to be the policy to be maintained with regard to the Commission.

II

The Simon Commission, in accordance with their declared intention to pay a preliminary visit to India before entering on their regular duties, landed at Bombay on 3rd February 1928, and immediately left for Delhi where they hoped to come in personal contact with members of the Indian Legislature which was then in session. As directed by the Executive of the National Congress, hostile mass demonstrations were held all over the country on the day of its arrival. *Hartal* was observed in every city and important town; students joined in the demonstrations, marching in processions, waving black flags and carrying banners with inscriptions such as "Simon, go back". Public meetings were held all over the country to condemn the Commission, and to reiterate and emphasize the nation's resolve to boycott it. At Bombay, a monster meeting, attended by over fifty thousand people, unparalleled in the history of political meetings in that city, was held on the Chowpatti sands; and the political leaders of different parties who took part in the meeting, all with one voice, once more, protested against the affront given to India by a supercilious Secretary of State and a misguided Cabinet, and re-affirmed their firm determination to vindicate their national honour by boycotting the Commission. At several meetings, reference was made to the successful boycott of the Milner Commission by Egypt, which ultimately compelled the proud British Government to come to terms

with the Egyptian Nationalists and their great leader, Zaglul Pasha, and the Indian people were exhorted to emulate the example so nobly and successfully set by the Egyptian people. At Madras, Calcutta and a few other places, these popular demonstrations were attended by disturbances; but, on the whole, they passed off peacefully.

On 7th February, 1928, Sir John Simon addressed a letter to the Viceroy, in which he announced, in some detail, the procedure which the Commission would follow. He put forward the plan of what he called a joint free conference between the Commission and a Committee of seven to be elected by the Indian legislature, and urged that such a plan would not only secure equal status between the British Commission and the Indian Committee, but also provide the opportunity for that free exchange of views and mutual influence which were best calculated to promote the largest measure of agreement that was possible.

The Commission and the Government evidently hoped that this statement of the Chairman would satisfy at least the moderate section of Indian opinion and thus lead to the weakening of the boycott. But this hope was destined to be disappointed. In a joint statement, party leaders declared :

We have most carefully considered the line of procedure indicated in the statement of Sir John Simon, issued to-day, but our objections to the Commission, as constituted, and the scheme as announced, are based on principles which remain unaffected by it. In the cir-

cumstances, we must adhere to our decision, that we cannot have anything to do with the Commission at any stage or in any form.

This statement was signed by Dr. Ansari, President of the Congress, Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Maulana Mahomed Ali, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Malaviya, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Kelkar, Mr. Jinnah, Sir Purshottamdas, Maulvi Mahomed Yakub and Raja Ghaznafar Ali. The Liberal leaders and Dr. Annie Besant also took the same view and endorsed the statement. Thus, India's attitude towards the Commission remained unaffected by the plan of a joint conference, as proposed by the Chairman of the Commission.

This policy of boycott was endorsed by the Legislative Assembly after a full-dress debate lasting for two days. On 16th February 1928, Lala Lajpat Rai moved a resolution in the Assembly, urging that the present constitution and scheme of the Statutory Commission were unacceptable to the House and that it would therefore have nothing to do with it at any stage and in any form. This resolution was passed, if we exclude official members who were of course bound to support the Government, by an overwhelming majority of elected members. The result of the division so gratified the House that it heartily acclaimed it with cries of "Bande Mataram" (Hail, Mother-land).

The Council of State, however, did not approve of the policy of boycott. The non-official veterans of the council were equally divided on the question, and

a resolution for the election of representatives of the Council to participate in the joint conference was carried by a considerable majority. This decision of India's Second Chamber was strongly condemned by public opinion, and some critics seriously suggested that if it went on thwarting and opposing the national will in this manner, it would serve no useful purpose in the Indian constitution and should be abolished.

Though the Government and the Chairman of the Commission did all that they could to persuade Indian leaders to give up the boycott, it became more and more apparent that the Commission would have to discharge its difficult duties without the slightest co-operation of those political parties which represented the true, growing mind of India, and exercised effective influence upon Indian opinion. The hope of Government now lay in those communal organisations and bodies, and those classes with vested interests, such as Non-Brahmans of Madras and Bombay, Jaghirdars, Inamdars and Zemindars, all of which hoped that their co-operation with the Commission would result in securing them special advantages and strengthening their position in general. The Commission's stay in India during its first visit, short though it was, must have convinced it of the strength of feeling aroused by the scheme framed by the Government; and, when it returned in winter to resume its duties and to examine witnesses, its itinerary was again everywhere marked by hostile demonstrations. In the meanwhile, all the Local Governments, except

that of C. P., introduced in their Councils motions for the constitution of provincial committees to co-operate in what was described by the Chairman of the Commission, as a Joint Free Conference. All the nationalist parties in the Provincial Legislatures strongly opposed the proposals to constitute the committees, and it was only by invoking the assistance of the official votes that the various Governments could succeed in the make-believe that these committees had the support of the provincial Councils. After registering their strong opposition to the entire scheme of the Commission and the principle upon which it was based, the nationalist parties in each local legislature walked out and took no part in any further proceedings in connection with these Committees. It was perfectly clear that, if the decision had been left entirely to the vote of non-official members, in most of these Councils, the proposals for co-operation with the Commission would have been rejected. There can be no more convincing proof of the utter inadequacy of the existing constitution, and of the fiction that it is founded on the general will of the people of India, and seeks to give effect to it, than the fact that the authorities had to rely upon their own servants to bring into existence some sort of agency to help the Commission in following the procedure laid down by itself. The debates on the proposals in the Councils were, however, most instructive and valuable. In the Bombay Legislative Council, the present writer attacked the constitution of the Commission on the ground that it

was unconstitutional. He may be pardoned for quoting the following from his speech :—

"My first argument against co-operation with the Commission is that the Commission, as constituted, is unconstitutional, and it logically follows that a constitutional body like this House which has come into existence by virtue of a legal constitutional instrument, should have nothing to do with a body which is unconstitutional. I consider the Commission unconstitutional, because its constitution offends against the fundamental principle and the real spirit underlying the historic announcement of 20th August 1917, upon which the existing constitution is based. That principle is, the essence of that spirit is, that the British and the Indian people are jointly responsible for the welfare and the advancement of the Indian people, and that they are both judges of the time and measure of its constitutional advance.

"The existing constitution, based on and derived from this pronouncement, which is really a pledge given by Parliament, substitutes, in principle, and, to some extent, in actual practice, the ultimate sovereignty of the Indian people for the sovereignty of the British Democracy, and the sovereignty of the British people and Parliament being thus modified and restricted, and the responsibility of the British Government and the Indian Government, which latter is a mixed Government of the British and Indians, being specifically recognised in the announcement, it follows, as a logical corollary that the responsibility for determining future constitutional progress must be shared both by the British and Indians, and that therefore any instrument or body that is set up for the purpose of discharging that responsibility must be a mixed instrument or body of British and Indians. It further follows that any instrument or body from which either of these two elements is excluded is not an instrument or body which is constitutionally competent to discharge that responsibility. In other words, such an instrument or body is unconstitutional. In plain language, the non-appointment

of Indians on the Commission makes the Commission unconstitutional.

"Sir, Lord Birkenhead, and all those who have supported his scheme in Parliament, have argued that the Government of India Act requires that the Statutory Commission to be appointed under section 84-A of that Act must be a Parliamentary Commission. I most emphatically dispute this contention. It is warranted neither by the language of the section itself, nor by the comments of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on that section, nor by what the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report have said about the Commission in that report. Far from this being the case, I maintain as against it, that the correct constitutional position is, that having regard to the wording of the section, to the comments of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, to what the authors of the report have said about the Commission, and, above all, having regard to the principle and policy embodied in the announcement of 20th August 1927, the Commission must be a mixed Commission of the British and Indians. The existing constitution does not enjoin a Parliamentary Commission; on the contrary, it does enjoin a mixed Commission of the British and Indians. Any Commission which does not comply with this fundamental condition is an unconstitutional Commission."

After making such inquiry as was possible in an extremely unfavourable and hostile atmosphere, the Commission has returned to England, and is making the best of a bad job. The boycott of the Commission was, indeed, not so complete or so absolutely united, as that of the Milner Commission by the small and compact Egyptian Nation; in the peculiar conditions of India, absolute unity is difficult to achieve. But the opposition to the Commission was sufficiently strong and general to make it abundantly clear that

awakened India would never tolerate any affront, conscious or unconscious, to her national self-respect, and that she was determined to win SWARAJ not as a matter of favour or gift from Great Britain, but by dint of her own merit, and of her inherent and inalienable right of national self-determination, though, in the exercise of that right, she was quite willing to render to the British people what was due to them. Apart from the objections to the Commission and its boycott, its deliberations can serve a useful purpose, only if its conclusions are found to be in general agreement with India's national demand, and can be implemented by an agreed settlement between the British Government and the accredited representatives of the Indian people. Whether this happy consummation will be brought about by the labours of the Commission, it is difficult to forecast at the time of writing.

CHAPTER XIV

INDIA FRAMES HER OWN CONSTITUTION

I

THOUGH the constitution of the Statutory Commission aroused a storm of opposition throughout the country, and all the leading parties scrupulously refrained from offering any co-operation to it, it must be admitted that it indirectly produced one good result; it led to a more vivid realization than ever before by Indian political leaders of the necessity and importance of framing a national constitution for India. The Legislative Assembly had, indeed, more than once, formulated a national demand; but no serious efforts had yet been made by the Indian Parliament, the Indian National Congress, or a National Convention, to frame a regular constitution, such as India desired, on the principle of national self-determination to which she had always appealed in support of her political freedom, ever since the inviolable sanctity of the principle had been declared by President Wilson. Western systems of self-government had sometimes been adversely criticized by individual politicians and political leaders who had urged with considerable plausibility, but with little clarity of thought, or grasp of fundamental principles

underlying democratic self-government, that India's constitution must not be an exotic imposed upon her by an alien Government and Parliament, but one suited to her national genius. The notion of national genius may not be an utter illusion ; it may contain a sub-stratum of truth. Again, to the national sense of those minds which cannot penetrate into words and realize their true meaning, it may make an irresistible appeal. But those who talk of India's constitution being suited to her national genius, unless they mean a constitution which is not based upon the principle of self-government at all, seem little to realize that the national genius of India, meaning by the expression, her past, her entire view of life and her social structure, is not congenial to any rational and real system of democratic self-government that can be devised. Dr. Annie Besant had, indeed, produced a Commonwealth of India Bill which embodied a scheme of representation which might claim to be more suited to India's national genius than any other. But precisely, this very feature of the Bill aroused little enthusiasm, and, in other respects, it was modelled on the Australian constitution and provided for a system of responsible government as completely Western as any system could be. And, moreover, for various reasons, neither the National Congress nor any other leading political body included it in its official programme, though, in the absence of an alternative measure, it received the general support of many members of every party.

Lord Birkenhead had twice challenged Indian leaders to prepare a constitution according to their own views and ideas. In his speech in the House of Lords on the 7th July 1925, he said :—

It has been the habit of the spokesmen of Swarajist thought to declare in anticipation that no constitution framed in the West can either be suitable for, or acceptable to, the peoples of India. It has always seemed to me that a very simple answer may be made to such a contention. We do not claim in Great Britain that we alone in the world are able to frame constitutions, though we are not altogether discontented with the humble constructive efforts which we have made in this field of human ingenuity. But if our critics in India are of opinion that their greater knowledge of Indian conditions qualifies them to succeed, where they tell us that we have failed, let them produce a constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement among the great peoples of India. Such a contribution to our problems would nowhere be resented. It would, on the contrary, be most carefully examined by the Government of India, by myself, and, I am sure, by the Commission, whenever that body may be assembled."

Again, in moving the constitution of the Statutory Commission in November 1927, Lord Birkenhead said :—

"It is sometimes said by our critics in India that it is for a Round-Table Conference or a Congress in India to decide upon the form of constitution suitable for themselves, and then for the British Parliament formally to pass it. This suggestion has not been lightly made. It has been seriously made by men who are entitled that their observations shall be seriously accepted. I can only make this comment. I have twice in the three years during which I have been Secretary of State invited our critics in India to put forward their own suggestions for a constitu-

tion, to indicate to us the form which, in their judgment, any reform of the constitution should take. That offer is still open."

Indian leaders began to realize more and more the force of the contention that their position would be immensely strengthened if they could frame a constitution such as they wanted, and which had behind it the general support of the whole nation. In fact, the constitutional movement had now reached a stage when India was bound to be confronted with the question of framing her own constitution. In most countries, such a stage had been reached, and it was impossible for India to escape it. The appointment of the Simon Commisson hastened that stage; and Indian leaders naturally and rightly decided that, whatever might be the ultimate attitude of the British Government and Parliament towards the national constitution that India might frame, it was desirable, in her own interests, that an earnest effort should be made to tackle the various difficult questions in connection with the constitutional problem, to reconcile conflicting claims, interests and viewpoints, and to formulate a constitution that might justly be regarded as representing the collective mind and will of India.

Accordingly, the Indian National Congress, which met at Madras during the Christmas week of 1927, authorized its Working Committee to draft a constitution in consultation with the committees of other organisations. It was also resolved that a special

convention should be convened to consider and approve the constitution that may thus be prepared. The lead thus given by the Congress was taken up by the Indian Muslim League which also appointed a Committee to confer with the Working Committee of the Congress for the purpose of drafting a constitution in which the interests of the Muslim community would be safe-guarded.

The Working Committee of the Congress issued invitations to all the principal political and communal organisations in the country, and a conference, called an All-Parties' Conference, was held at Delhi on 12th February 1928 to consider the question of the constitution in all its bearings.

The first question with which the Conference was faced was : What should be the objective to be embodied in the constitution ? The Madras Congress had adopted a resolution declaring that national independence, and not merely Dominion Status, was the goal of India ; and some delegates at the Conference urged that the basic principle of the constitution should be national independence. It was ultimately resolved that the formula of full responsible government should be adopted, with the clear understanding that those who believed in independence would have the fullest liberty to work for it. The first resolution of the Conference, therefore, was that the constitution should provide for the establishment of full responsible government.

Having decided this fundamental question, the Conference turned to other questions including the most difficult and delicate question of communal representation. The Muslim League insisted on its own proposals as regards the representation of the Muslim Community, to which the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikhs did not agree, with the result that little progress was made in the framing of the Constitution, and the Conference was adjourned.

When the Conference met again at Bombay on 19th May 1928, the prospect of reaching an agreed settlement of the communal question was far from hopeful; it was feared that the whole movement for framing a national constitution would be wrecked on the rock of the communal issue. The Conference threatened to prove abortive, when this disaster was averted by the adoption of a resolution appointing a small Committee to consider and determine the principles of the constitution. The Committee was required to give the most careful consideration to the proposals of the Muslim League and other communal organisations; and it was hoped that the Committee would succeed in finding out a formula which would meet all conflicting claims and interests.

Every care was taken to make the Committee thoroughly representative of all the more important parties and organisations. It was presided over by Pundit Motilal Nehru, the great leader of the Swarajist Party; the Muslim community was represented by Sir Ali Imam, a sagacious and eminent Mohammedan

leader, and Mr. Shuaib Qureshi; Mr. Jayakar and Mr. Aney, both members of the Legislative Assembly and jealous guardians of Hindu interests, represented the Hindu Mahasabha. The view-point of the Non-Brahman Party was represented by Mr. G. R. Pradhan, a member of the Central Provinces Legislative Council. The Liberal Party was ably represented by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru; while, in Mr. N. M. Joshi, Labour had a representative than whom there could be no man better able to defend the interests of the growing Labour movement in India.

The Committee entered on its task with great earnestness, with the sole object of producing a constitution which would be reasonable, meet the requirements of a new India that sought to realize its destiny as a great, free, modern nation, with full sympathy with the highest ends of internationalism, reconcile the provisional needs of communalism with the dominant conditions and requirements of nationalism, safeguard every legitimate interest, and thus be acceptable to the people of India as a whole, as representing the greatest agreement that was possible to reach on a question so difficult and complicated in itself that differences of opinion could not be entirely avoided, particularly in a country with such peculiar and diverse conditions. It held twenty-five sittings, besides numerous conferences, and ultimately succeeded in drafting a constitution which was considered on all hands as a remarkable contribution to the solution of India's political and constitutional problem.

The most difficult question which the Committee had to decide was, of course, the communal aspect of the constitutional problem; and the wise, judicial and statesmanlike spirit with which it has tried to approach and solve it deserves commendation. It says :—

"From the constitutional point of view, the communal controversies are of no very great importance. But, whatever their relative importance might be, they occupy men's minds much more than matters of greater import and cast their shadow over all political work. We thus find ourselves face to face with a number of conflicting resolutions and recommendations all of which are equally entitled to our respect. But when we find that the view of the Madras Congress and the Muslim League is diametrically opposed to that of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikh League, we must respectfully express our inability to accept either in its entirety. Indeed, the very fact that we are called upon to determine the principles of the constitution after considering these divergent views shows that we are expected to exercise our own judgment in the matter and make such recommendations as are in our opinion most conducive to the political advancement of the country. We realize that our recommendations, however sound and expedient they may be, can have weight and effect only to the extent that they are acceptable to all the principal parties concerned. The only hope for an agreed constitution lies in finding the basis for a just and equitable compromise between all the parties after a full and fair consideration of all the circumstances."

The All Parties' Conference met again at Lucknow on 28th August 1928 under the presidency of Dr. Ansari, a highly respected Mohammedan leader, to consider the constitution framed by the Nehru

Committee. Dr. Ansari thus described the great significance of the work done by the Committee :—

"India has gone through many and varied phases of the struggle for liberty, but never in the chequered history of the country's fight for freedom, had representatives of all schools of political thought assembled together to draw up a definite scheme of our constitution. That has now been done by the Committee. It is, in itself, a historic event, and when we see the background of the dark events of the last few years, resulting in spasmodic and ineffective attempts to introduce some light into the darkness of wilderness, of confused aims and objects in which we had lost ourselves, and of complacent challenges that were being thrown at us both from within the country and beyond the seven seas, I need hardly tell you that this report becomes a doubly historic event."

The note of optimism and confidence thus sounded by the President was fully maintained throughout the proceedings of the Conference. It set the seal of its approval upon the constitution, and empowered the Committee to take such steps as might be necessary to put it in the form of a Bill to be subsequently submitted to a National Convention for adoption. The Indian National Congress and the National Liberal Federation, which met during the Christmas week, also accorded their hearty support to the scheme drafted by the Nehru Committee.

II

Let us now consider the principal provisions of the constitution framed by the Nehru Committee and adopted by the National Congress, the National Liberal Federation and the All-Parties' Conference.

The first provision defines the constitutional status of India, and lays down that it shall be neither more nor less than that of the Dominions in the Community of Nations known as the British Empire. Another provision declares that the powers of the Indian Parliament with respect to foreign affairs, not including the Indian States, shall be the same as those exercised by the self-governing Dominions. Thus the constitution embodies the fundamental principle of Dominion Status, as it has been realized at present, or may be realized in future. The constitution fully recognises and maintains the British connection; it does not set up an independent Sovereign State; but, on the other hand, it lays down that India's constitutional status shall, in no way, be inferior to that of the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of the New Zealand, the Union of South Africa and the Irish Free State. Provided the British connection is not broken off without sufficient reason, India's right to national and international growth and development shall be complete, absolute and unfettered.

Having thus clearly defined India's status, the constitution, following the example of modern written constitutions, lays down the fundamental rights of the Indian people. At the outset, the principle is asserted that sovereignty belongs to the Indian people, and that, consequently, all powers of Government, and all authority, legislative, executive and judicial, emanate from them.

The list of the fundamental rights of the people includes the following ;—

[1] guarantee to all titles to private and personal property lawfully acquired.

[2] Adequate provision by the State for imparting public instruction in primary schools to the children of members of minorities of considerable strength in the population, through the medium of their own language and in such script as is in vogue among them.

[3] Non-existence of a state religion.

[4] Equal right of access to, and use of, public roads, public wells and all other places of public resort—a provision evidently intended in the interests of the depressed classes.

[5] Equality of the sexes as regards citizenship.

[6] Freedom of combination and association for the improvement of labour and economic conditions.

[7] Guarantee of fair rents and permanence of tenure to agricultural tenants.

The declaration of fundamental rights in the constitution contains nothing of a revolutionary nature; indeed, in some respects, it proceeds on such conservative lines, that, while vested interests will feel sense of security under the constitution, it is not at all surprising that the Socialist and Communist schools of thought have objected to it, as calculated to perpetuate a capitalistic or bourgeoisie state of society. The rights of women, of depressed classes, of Capital and Labour, and of minorities are strictly safe-guarded in the Declaration of Rights.

Some modern constitutions contain a Declaration, not only of Rights, but of Duties. This is a decided improvement in the making of constitutions. Citizens have, not only rights, but duties; and the efficiency and success of democratic responsible government depend no less on the performance of duties than on the exercise of rights; indeed, it depends much more on the former than on the latter. The Constitution framed by the Nehru Committee contains no Declaration of Duties.

The Constitution provides for a federal system, with residuary powers vested in the Central Government. The peculiar conditions of India, the vulnerability of its North-Western Frontier, and the fact that it is out of a unitary system that federalism is to be created, render it imperative that the residuary powers should be vested in the Government of the Indian Commonwealth, and not in those of the constituent states. This is fully recognised in the Constitution. But it would have been better, if the type of federation recommended had been more after the model of that introduced by the German Republic in its constitution than that obtaining in the Dominion of Canada.

The Constitution also provides for full responsible Government with the ministry jointly responsible to the legislature, and for a bi-cameral system in the Central Government, but not in the Governments of the Provinces. The House of Representatives is to consist of 500 members, and the Senate, of 200 members. The latter are to be elected by members of Provincial

Councils, and those of the House of Representatives and the Provincial Councils, by adult suffrage.' The constitution of a Second Chamber is a difficult question, and it is open to doubt whether the proper method of electing it is by members of Provincial Councils. Again, if the Second Chamber is to serve a useful purpose, and to command popular respect, it is necessary that it should have equal powers with the House of Representatives, and that all differences between them should be settled by a majority in a joint session.

The working of Parliamentary Government in the West has shown the necessity of strong and stable ministries. In India, for many years to come, parties and groups are likely to be so many that it seems necessary to provide that, as a general rule, a ministry should not be removable, and that it may be removed only after the lapse of a certain period from its appointment, and that, too, only by a two-thirds majority of members present. The life of the House of Representatives and of Provincial Councils should be for five years, and for the first three years, a ministry should not be removable, except on certain specified grounds, such as corruption and serious breach of confidence; but after the expiry of this period, it may be removable on a motion indicating a vote of censure, passed by a two-thirds majority of members present. The responsibility of a ministry to the legislature must be combined with efficiency and stability; and this must be ensured by such or similar provisions.

The provisions in the Constitution relating to defence are important and show the cautious and statesmanlike spirit of the Committee and its Chairman. A Committee of Defence is to be constituted, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Commander-in-Chief, the Commander of the Air Forces, the Commander of the Naval Forces, the Chief of the General Staff, and two other experts. The function of this Committee will be to advise the Government on general questions of policy, and on questions of defence. The military budget is to be subject to the vote of the House of Representatives, but in the event of any foreign aggression on India, or of a reasonable apprehension of such aggression, the Government may incur any expenditure that may be deemed necessary without the vote of the Legislature. Further, it is only on the recommendation of the Committee of Defence that a measure affecting the discipline or maintenance of any part of the military, naval or air forces, may be introduced in the Legislature.

Lastly, we may refer to the provisions of the Constitution regarding communal representation. As these provisions are not approved of by some sections of Moslem opinion, including that led by His Highness the Aga Khan and Sir Shafi of the Punjaub, and as it is necessary that they should be fully understood and judged carefully and dispassionately on their own merits, we quote them in full :—

"I. There shall be joint mixed electorates throughout India for the House of Representatives and the Provincial legislatures.

II. There shall be no reservation of seats for the House of Representatives except for Muslims in provinces where they are in a minority, and non-Muslims in the N. W. Frontier Province. Such reservation will be in strict proportion to the Muslim population in every province where they are in a minority and in proportion to the no Muslim population in the N. W. Frontier Province. The Muslims or non-Muslims, where reservation is allowed to them, shall have the right to contest additional seats.

III. In the provinces

(a) there shall be no reservation of seats for any community in the Punjaub and Bengal, provided that the question of communal representation will be open for reconsideration if so desired by any community after working the recommended system for 10 years;

(b) in provinces other than the Punjaub and Bengal, there will be reservation of seats for Muslim minorities on population basis with the right to contest additional seats;

(c) in the N. W. Frontier Province, there shall be similar reservation of seats for non-Muslims with the right to contest other seats.

IV. Reservation of seats, where allowed, shall be for a fixed period of ten years. Provided that the question will be open for reconsideration after the expiration of that period if so desired by any community.

Such are the provisions of the Constitution as regards the difficult question of communal representation. Those who believe in the necessity of separate electorates for the Moslem community, who think that by such electorates only, the legitimate interests of the Moslem minority can be properly protected, and who do not consider them in any way detrimental to the

vital interests of a strong, united Indian nationality, may not approve of these proposals, and insist on the retention of separate communal electorates; and the considerations of expediency may prove to be so decisive as to make it undesirable to radically alter the existing system in the teeth of serious opposition. But there can be no doubt that if the solution recommended by the All-Parties Conference is considered on its merits from the broad, necessary national point of view, it will be found, in the long run, to be the best calculated to harmonise the rightful claims of a considerable and powerful minority with those of the Indian nation as a whole. Some people and sections of opinion may honestly think that communal electorates are essential; nor need we exaggerate the evils of such electorates by laying every evil and every communal disturbance or fracas at their door. But there can be no doubt that the scheme proposed by the All-Parties Conference is a progressive one, and, at any rate, deserves to be given a fair trial for a period of ten years, as suggested by the Conference. While the question is not one of such over-riding importance as to justify an irrevocable split between the two communities or any large sections thereof, and while it is more desirable to reach an agreement among all Indian communities, as regards further extension of political power, even though such agreement can be realized only on the basis of the continuance of the existing system of communal electorates, while, in other words, the attainment of *Swaraj* should not be

sacrificed at the altar of an uncompromising and meticulous insistence on a common electoral roll, with or without reservation of seats, it is impossible for all the more far-seeing and progresive elements in every community not to realize that a healthy and strong Indian Nationalism, and a no less healthy, strong and progressive Indian Democracy, can be built up only on the granite rock of the perfect fusion of all the diverse communal interests and points of view into a thoroughly and intensely national outlook and allegiance. The supreme merit of the proposals of the All-India Conference lies in this that they are a genuine and notable attempt to bridge the widening gulf between narrow communalism and broad, united nationalism. They seek to make all the Indian communities realize as much as it is possible to do so by means of the electoral roll that their interests are wholly identical.

III

What is the exact strength of public opinion behind the Constitution framed by the Nehru Committee and adopted by the All-Parties' Conference and the Indian National Congress? That it is not accepted in its entirety by all sections of Indian opinion cannot be denied. The school of national independence does not approve of it, because it is based on the principle of Dominion Status; but it heartily supports its scheme of communal representation. The All-India Christian Conference, representing a progressive community whose views on

public questions are entitled to considerable weight, has expressed its general approval of the Constitution, but thinks that it does not sufficiently safe-guard the interests of the minorities, and that the position assigned by it to the depressed and backward classes is far from satisfactory. The opinion of the Sikh community seems to be sharply divided. While one section of the community has given it its full support, the other, which stands for the goal of national independence, thinks that it "sins against the self-respect and dignity of India." Some sections of the non-Brahmin community in the Bombay Presidency insist on the maintenance of the existing arrangement whereby seats are reserved for the Mahratta and the allied castes in some districts, in the representation on the Provincial Council; while the depressed classes feel that their claims and interests are virtually ignored in the Constitution. The latter claim special representation, at least by means of reservation of seats, on the ground that, in the general electorates, their candidates will have no chance whatever of being elected, and that it is impossible for caste Hindus to represent them properly and to do all that is necessary to remove their disabilities, to elevate their status and to raise them to the level of the advanced communities.

The Moslem community is divided on the question. A considerable section including some of the best and most progressive Mahomedans—men like Dr. Ansari, Sir Ali Imam, the Maharaja of Mahmuda-

bad—entirely approves of the Constitution, including the scheme for communal representation; on the other hand, another considerable and influential section under the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan and Sir Mahomed Shafi, strongly urges the retention of separate electorates. This section has not, indeed, framed a separate constitution of its own; but its views are embodied in a resolution passed by a conference held under the presidency of His Highness the Aga Khan at Delhi on 31st December 1928. As it is important to know, as fully and precisely as possible, the position taken up by this section of Moslem opinion, we quote the resolution *in extenso*:—

"Whereas in view of India's vast extent and its ethnological, linguistic, administrative and geographical or territorial divisions, the only form of Government suitable to Indian conditions is a federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent States, the Central Government having control only over such matters of common interest as may be specially entrusted to it by the constitution;

"And whereas it is essential that no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding intercommunal matters be moved, discussed or passed by any legislature, central or provincial, if a three-fourths majority of the members of either Hindu or the Moslem community affected thereby in that legislature opposed the introduction, discussion or passing of such bill, resolution, motion or amendment.

"And whereas the right of the Moslems to elect their representatives on the various Indian legislatures through separate electorates is now the law of the land, and Moslems cannot be deprived of that right without their consent; and whereas in the conditions existing at present in India, and so long as those conditions continue to exist, representation in the various legislatures and other statutory self-

governing bodies of Moslems through their own separate electorates, is essential in order to bring into existence a really representative democratic Government; and whereas so long as Mussalmans are not satisfied that their rights and interests are adequately safe-guarded in the constitution, they will in no way consent to the establishment of joint electorates whether with or without conditions; and whereas for the purposes aforesaid, it is essential that Mussalmans should have their due share in the Central and Provincial cabinets; and whereas it is essential that representation of Mussalmans in various legislatures and other statutory self-governing bodies should be based on a plan whereby the Moslem majority, in those provinces where Mussalmans constitute a majority of the population, shall in no way be affected, and in the province in which the Mussalmans constitute a minority, they shall have a representation in no case less than that enjoyed by them under the existing law: and whereas the representative Muslim gatherings in all the provinces in India have unanimously resolved that with a view to provide adequate safe-guards for the protection of the Muslim interests in India as a whole, Mussalmans should have the right of 33⅓ per cent. representation in the Central Legislature, this Conference entirely endorses that demand;

"And whereas on economic, linguistic geographical and administrative grounds, the province of Sind has no affinity whatever with the rest of the Bombay Presidency and its constitution into a separate province possessing its own separate legislative and administrative machinery on the same lines as in other provinces of India is essential in the interests of its people, the Hindi minority in Sind being given adequate and effective representation in excess of their proportion in the population as may be given to Mussalmans in the provinces in which they constitute a minority of population:

"And whereas the introduction of constitutional reforms in North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan along such lines as may be adopted in other provinces of India is essential, not only in the interests of those pro-

vinces, but also of the constitutional advance of India as a whole, the Hindu minorities in those provinces being given adequate and effective representation as is given to the Moslem community in provinces in which it constitutes a minority of population; and whereas it is essential in the interests of Indian administration that provision should be made in the constitution giving Mussalmans their adequate share along with other Indians in all the services of the State and of all statutory self governing bodies having due regard to the requirements of efficiency; and whereas having regard to socio-political conditions obtaining in India, it is essential that the Indian constitution should embody adequate safe-guards for the protection of Moslem culture and for the promotion of Moslem education, language, religion, personal law and Moslem charitable institutions and for their due share in the grants-in-aid; and whereas it is essential that the constitution should provide that no change in the Indian constitution shall, after its inauguration, be made by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of all the states constituting the Indian Federation, this Conference emphatically declares that no constitution, by whomsoever proposed or devised, will be acceptable to Indian Mussalmans unless it conforms with the principles embodied in this resolution."

In view of these differences of opinion, it will not be true to say that the Constitution, as a whole, has received the general approval of the people of India. It is, indeed, a matter of deep regret that these differences could not be adjusted, and the British Government and Parliament confronted with a constitution unanimously agreed to by all the communities, political parties and sections of opinion in India. But while it is true that the Constitution has not met with general acceptance, there seems little doubt that if a plebiscite were taken, the Indian electorate would endorse it by

a large majority. In that sense, at any rate, it can justly claim to be regarded as the national constitution of India. At all events, it cannot be denied that it commands the hearty approval of a very large, weighty and powerful body of Indian opinion. And the fact that it has received the cordial support of the Indian Liberals is a very strong point in its favour. Besides, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that, so far as the establishment of *Swaraj*, or of full responsible Government and Dominion Status, is concerned, all the Indian communities, and all those political parties which do not wish to sever the British connection, are in complete accord; all of them demand that the time is come when all political power must be transferred from the British Electorate to the Indian Electorate. On this central and fundamental issue, all India is firmly united. Differences of opinion may exist as to whether the residuary power should be vested in the Federal Government or the State Governments, whether the Provincial Legislatures should be bi-cameral or uni-cameral, whether or not, the franchise should be lowered to adult suffrage, or as regards the constitution of the Senate or the distribution of subjects and sources of revenue between the Central and the Provincial Governments or communal representation. But there can be no doubt that, whatever might be the solution ultimately reached on these constitutional questions on which perfect unanimity is impossible, the constitution which India asks for is one which must establish,

full responsible Government, both provincial and national, and raise her to the status of a British Dominion. These differences may not be entirely overcome ; they may be regretted ; it is easy to exaggerate them, or to draw false, erroneous or misleading inferences from them. But the fact that the Indian constitution, whatever might be its detailed provisions, must establish SWARAJ or full responsible Government with Dominion Status, cannot be denied or ignored by those who desire to have a true appreciation of the Indian situation in all its essential character.

CHAPTER XV

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

"I am one of those who always believed that there was a tremendous work in the world for the British Commonwealth of Nations to perform. In this respect, I hope that within a period of few months rather than years, there will be a new Dominion added to the Commonwealth of our Nations, a Dominion that will find self-respect as an equal within this Commonwealth, I refer to India". —*The Right Hon. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald at the British Commonwealth Labour Conference, July 2nd, 1928.*

"In my opinion, if the British Government mean what they say, and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for Swaraj within the Empire, but would not hesitate to sever all connection if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people."—*Mahatma Gandhi at the Belgaum Congress, 1924.*

"What is our destination? My answer straight and simple is Freedom in substance, and not merely in form, by whatever name you call it. The Madras Congress has declared the goal as complete independence. The All-Parties' Committee has recommended Dominion Status. . . I am for complete independence—as complete as it can be —but I am not against full Dominion Status—as full as any Dominion possesses it to-day—provided I get it before it loses all attraction. I am for severance of British connection as it subsists with us to-day, but am not against it as it exists with the Dominions."—*Pandit Motilal Nehru at the Indian National Congress, 1928.*

"Any further delay (in granting Dominion Status) was fraught with danger to the mutual relations of India and England."—*Resolution passed at the National Liberal Federation, 1928.*

I

One serious effect of the policy of the British Government with regard to the Indian Statutory Commission was to give impetus to the movement for national independence. The desire for national independence had never been completely eradicated; it is, perhaps, impossible that, in any civilized country, this desire should be quite extinct. The stream of Indian history, ever since the country became a prey to foreign invasions, has always revealed two currents. While she has failed to successfully resist foreign aggressions, ever since the invasion of Alexander the Great, she has never completely reconciled herself to foreign rule. Immediately after Alexander's death, the people rose in revolt and regained their independence. The Mahomedans succeeded in establishing their domination for a fairly long period; but the Hindus never willingly acquiesced in it, and took every favourable opportunity to throw off their yoke. By the time the British began to think of becoming a ruling Power in India and to consolidate and strengthen their position as such, Moslem rule had been greatly undermined by the brave and patriotic Mahrattas. British rule opened a new and higher life before the country; it gave promise of a richer, nobler, more enlightened and fuller national life than India had ever known before. It was, therefore, on the whole, generally popular, at least in its early stages. Nevertheless, sections of people never accepted it willingly, or reconciled themselves to it cheerfully.

The Mutiny of 1857 was the first important attempt to overthrow British rule and regain national independence. It failed because it was ill-organised and badly led, and, moreover, did not represent a united national struggle or movement But its significance lay in the fact, that it showed to the European world that India was not a nation of slaves, but possessed the spirit of self-assertion and resistance. It led to important changes in British policy ; it would not be too much to say that, by directly leading to the enactment of the Indian Councils Act of 1861, it laid the foundation, unrecognised and unrecognisable as such though it was at the time, of Indian Swaraj. The increasingly enlightened and progressive British policy succeeded in rallying Indian peoples under British rule ; and, if any foreign rule acted as a spell, and won the fairly general willing acquiescence of the subject population, it was the British rule in India. And yet, the feeling of national independence used at times to express itself. When the spirit of Imperialism ran high in Great Britain and was deeply stamped on Indian policy in the seventies of the last century, that feeling became so articulate that it found expression in the utterances and writings of responsible publicists. The late Mr. Vishnu Shastri Chiplunker sang the glories of national independence in a remarkable, popular essay on "The Condition of our Country" published in 1879. The liberal policy of Lord Ripon and the constitutional movement inaugurated by

the Indian National Congress in 1885 were unfavourable to the growth of any desire, feeling or movement for national independence; and it may be said that the national mind of India became reconciled to the British connection, though it became more and more discontented with the state of subjection and inferiority to which the Indian people had been reduced.

The high-handed policy of Lord Curzon in defying the sentiments, wishes and aspirations of the Indian people, and in effecting the partition of Bengal, led to the revival of the feeling, spirit and movement of national independence; and, since then, they have never ceased to work as a factor or a force, sometimes strong, often weak, in Indian politics. A definite school of national independence actually arose in 1906, and, under the leaderships of Mr. Aurobindo Ghosh and Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, soon exercised such prodigious influence upon young men, that it seemed as though it would carry everything before it, and the Indian National Congress, which met at Calcutta in that year, would declare itself in favour of severing the British connection. But this development of Congress policy was averted by the statesmanship and the vast personal influence of its President, the late Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. The introduction of the Morley-Minto and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms prevented the growth of this movement; and in Congress politics, its influence began to wane, though, outside, it still existed, and sometimes made its

existence and influence felt. A provincial Conference here, and a provincial Conference there, sometimes raised a voice in favour of national independence; but, until the year, 1927, the National Congress had set its face strongly against it. Mahatma Gandhi had always stood for the British connection, and discouraged the movement for seceding from the British Commonwealth of Nations. In 1925, the late Mr. Das, the great Bengali Swarajist leader, also, had unequivocally declared that, in his considered view, *Swaraj* within the British Commonwealth was preferable to national independence.

The attitude of the National Congress with regard to national independence, however, at once underwent a change, as a result of the British policy in connection with the Statutory Commission. The Congress claimed the right of national self-determination, and the Swarajist Party within it, that is, the party which really controlled Congress policy ever since the ban against the Councils was removed, had asked for a Round Table Conference to settle the Indian constitution. It, therefore, considered that the appointment and constitution of the Commission revealed such a callous disregard of the National Will of India as to justify a reconsideration of its attitude towards the British connection. It passed a resolution declaring that the political goal of the Indian people was national independence. Thus, for the first time, the premier political body, to whose agitation and efforts, India owes all her constitutional advance, took the extreme step of declaring that the

Indian people would seek their highest and fullest national self-realisation by the path of national independence. The lead thus given by the National Congress was taken up by the Punjaub, Delhi and United Provinces Provincial Conferences, and also by the United Provinces Muslim All-Parties' Conference held at Cawnpur in November 1928. A significant incident occurred at this last All-Parties' Conference. When some members objected to the resolution, the women-delegates, from behind their Purdah, sent a written statement to the President, saying that if men had not the courage to fight for national independence, they would come out of Purdah, and take their place in the struggle for independence. This action on the part of the women-delegates had great effect upon the waverers, and the resolution was passed with one single dissentient voice, that of Mr. (now Sir) Shafi.

The resolution in favour of national independence was reaffirmed on 3rd November, 1928, by the All-India Congress Committee which further declared that "there can be no true freedom till the British connection is severed."

This attitude was somewhat modified at the session of the National Congress held at Calcutta during the Christmas week of 1928. Mahatma Gandhi moved the following resolution, viz. :—

"This Congress, having considered the constitution recommended by the All-Parties' Committee's Report, welcomes it as a great contribution towards the solution of India's political and communal problems, and congratulates

the Committee on the virtual unanimity of its recommendations, and, while adhering to the resolution relating to complete independence, passed at the Madras Congress, approves of the constitution drawn up by the Committee as a great step in political advance, especially as it represents the largest measure of agreement attained among the important parties in the country.

"Subject to the exigencies of the political situation, this Congress will adopt the constitution in its entirety if it is accepted by the British Parliament on or before December 31, 1929, but, in the event of its non-acceptance by that date, or its earlier rejection, the Congress will organise non-violent non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse taxation, and in such other manner as may be decided upon. Consistently with the above, nothing in this resolution shall interfere with the carrying on, in the name of the Congress, of the propaganda for complete independence."

This resolution was strongly opposed by all those who stood for undiluted national independence, and had no desire at all to compromise with the British Government on the question. An amendment to that effect was actually moved by Mr. Subash Chandra Bose who, along with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, son of Pundit Motilal Nehru, represent Young India with its ardent faith in the resurgence of India as an independent nation absolutely free from British control; but the wise and mature advice of Mahatma Gandhi prevailed, and the amendment was rejected by 1,350 as against 973 votes. But the large measure of support given to the amendment proves beyond doubt that the ideal of national independence has captured the heart of Young India, and that the movement for its realisation is growing in strength.

Mahatma Gandhi and Pundit Motilal Nehru still have an enormous hold on the mind and soul of India, and, so long as they stand for the goal of Dominion Status in preference to that of national independence, there is little chance of the movement for severing the British connection becoming the dominant political movement in the country. Mahatma Gandhi has, however, made it clear, more than once, that he will not hesitate to join the movement for independence, in case the ultimatum given by the Congress is rejected.

This, then, is the most important political development—the growth of the Independence Movement, and the possibility of the National Congress giving up the ideal of Dominion Status and adopting in its place that of national independence, in case the British Government rejects the demands as embodied in the constitution framed by the Nehru Committee.

II

But this is not the only important development that has taken place within recent years. There has been a great awakening among the masses, and the peasantry and Labour have developed a keener sense of their rights, and a stouter spirit of self-assertion and resistance, and have been evincing a livelier interest in public questions. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms have fulfilled their purpose; they have brought about such a stirring of the "dumb millions" of India as had never been witnessed before. In their historic report on Constitutional Reforms, Mr. Montagu and Lord

Chelmsford, in justifying their proposals, made the following profound observations :

We are not setting about to stir 95% of the people out of their peaceful conservatism and setting their feet upon a new and difficult path merely at the bidding of the other 5%. Our reason is the faith that is in us. We have shown how, step by step, British policy in India had been steadily directed to a point at which the question of a self-governing India was bound to arise; how impulses, at first faint, have been encouraged by education and opportunity; how the growth quickened nine years ago, and was immeasurably accelerated by the War.·········We believe profoundly that the time has now come when the sheltered existence which we have given India cannot be prolonged without damage to her national life; that we have a richer gift for her people than any we have yet bestowed on them; that nationhood within the Empire represents something better than anything India has hitherto attained; that the placid, pathetic contentment of the masses is not the soil on which such Indian nationhood will grow, and that in deliberately disturbing it, we are working for her highest good".

There is no doubt that, as designed by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, "the placid, pathetic contentment of the masses" of India has been disturbed. They have been awakened from their long sleep of centuries, and are struggling to attain a higher and worthier life. True, this awakening has not yet produced an adequate sense of civic or political responsibility; but that sense may be confidently expected to come with education, training in the administration of local affairs, use of the franchise, and exercise of responsibility itself. In all countries where the awaken-

ing of the masses has taken place, the sense of responsibility has followed, and not preceded, awakening.

With the stirring of the masses, Peasants' and Workers' parties have been formed. The condition of Labour in India is as yet far from satisfactory, and the problem of the relations between Capital and Labour still awaits a satisfactory solution. But Labour is being better and better organised, and its influence more and more felt on the policy and attitude of both Capital and the Government. The working classes in large industrial centres are becoming increasingly conscious of their strength, and have often resorted to strikes to enforce their demands. Labour troubles have, of late, been too frequent, and resulted in disturbances which have necessitated the employment of the military forces to put them down. The Labour Congress held at Jharia in December 1928 warned the Government against showing any partiality for capitalists, and threatened a general strike, if they continued their policy of seeking to put down strikes by police or military force.

The awakening and organisation of the peasantry mark an important development in the national life of India. The successful movement which the agriculturists in the Bardoli Taluka in Guzerath carried on against arbitrary and unjust enhancement of land revenue is a significant illustration of the growing power of the peasantry, and its capacity for making sacrifices for a cause in which they have faith. Their example has had great effect upon the agricultural

population throughout the Bombay Presidency, and in every Taluka where increased assessment of land revenue has been sanctioned or proposed, what is called the Bardoli spirit of *Satyagraha* or passive resistance is being manifested in a greater or less degree. When the Government of Bombay, in 1928, introduced in the Legislative Council, a Bill to prevent excessive fragmentation of small holdings, the agriculturists carried on such a strong agitation against it, that, though the Bill was really a beneficent measure, the Government decided that, rather than create discontent among the agricultural classes, the more politic course was to withdraw the Bill. Thus, the peasantry has shown its growing strength by compelling the Government to yield in these two cases. The days when the masses used to look upon the Government as *Mabap Sarkar* are gone for ever; and, it is now quite absurd to say, as British statesmen of the ilk of Lord Birkenhead whose knowledge of India is really out of date, still do, that they are dumb millions, for whose welfare and progress the British democracy is responsible. The Indian masses are now showing a growing capacity for taking care of themselves; they are becoming the makers of their own destiny.

Two other features of the recent development of the national life of India deserve to be noted and stressed. They are, first, the woman's movement, and, secondly, the awakening of the depressed classes. The modern woman has appeared in India, as in every other progressive country, and is taking her

legitimate place in national life. Woman's education has made considerable progress, and, every year, the Indian Universities are turning out an increasing number of women-graduates. Women are seeking social emancipation, and taking part in every public activity. They exercise the franchise, sit on school Committees, take part in congress activities, attend and address public meetings, hold conferences, carry on agitation against social evils and wrongs, are members of legislatures, and have even gone to jail along with their patriotic husbands and brothers. They are as keen and ardent supporters of SWARAJ as men. The Indian woman is coming into her own, and has a great future before her. She will probably evolve a type of womanhood that with its blend of the spiritual and the material, of the ideal and the real, and with its charm, grace, simplicity, high personal character, and its spirit of self-abnegation, will extort universal admiration and emulation. The new Indian Womanhood will, in all probability, become a world-wide force, example and inspiration.

The depressed classes number one-sixth of the Indian population, and their condition, until a few years ago, was so sad and miserable as to constitute a disgrace to Indian society, civilisation and culture. It is still far from satisfactory, though considerable improvement has taken place. The social and religious disabilities, from which they have been suffering for centuries past, have not yet been completely removed; ignorance, force of custom, orthodoxy, particularly in

rural areas, are still strong enough to offer serious obstacles on the path of their elevation. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the movement for their emancipation is growing apace. The greatest factor that would assure the ultimate triumph of this movement is the spirit of self-improvement and self-reliance aroused among the depressed classes themselves. They share the general desire for education; they are giving up those evil habits and customs which partly account for their untouchability. Their representatives are elected or nominated to local bodies and legislatures. One of them, a member of the Legislative Assembly, has worked on the Central Indian Committee constituted to co-operate with the Statutory Commission; and another, Dr. Ambedkar, a member of the Inner Temple, and author of two remarkable books on finance, is a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, and, for sometime past, has been leading, with great ability and persistence, the movement of the depressed classes in the Bombay Presidency. He is also a member of the Committee elected by the Bombay Legislative Council to co-operate with the Statutory Commission, and, as such, has submitted a report which is a thoughtful contribution to the solution of India's constitutional problem. All this shows that the movement of the depressed classes is making steady progress. They are now leading an agitation for the removal of the bar which denies them entry into public Hindu temples, and, for this purpose, are employing the same weapon

of *Satyagraha*, or passive resistance, which is now included in the armoury of Congress politics. And, already, signs are clearly visible that orthodoxy will have to concede their demand.

What is the attitude of the leaders of these depressed classes towards the *Swaraj* movement? Are they opposed to it, because Hindu Society has treated those classes so badly, and they still labour under grievous wrongs and serious social disabilities? Far from it. The fire of nationalism burns within them as much as within caste Hindus, and they desire, no less than the latter, that India should become a self-governing, progressive and great nation. The following recommendations made by Dr. Ambedkar show that they are not behind the advanced communities in their desire to attain *Swaraj*:—

(1)—There should be complete responsibility in the Provincial executive subject to the proviso that if members of the Legislature resolve to make it a reserved subject, effect shall be given to their resolution.

(2)—Under no circumstances should the executive be made irremovable. There shall be no communal representation in the executive. Ministers shall be amenable to courts of law for illegal acts. The constitution should provide for the impeachment of Ministers. There should be joint responsibility in the executive. The executive should be presided over by a Prime Minister and not by the Governor.

(3)- The Governor should have the position of a constitutional head. He should have no emergency powers.

(4)—There should be adult franchise.

(5)—The Legislature should be wholly elective. All class and communal electorates should be abolished except for Europeans. Reserved seats should be provided for

Mahomedans, Depressed Classes and Anglo-Indians, and for the Non-Brahmins only if the franchise continues to be a restricted one.

(6)—The Legislature should consist of 140 members. Of these, Mahomedans should have 33 and the Depressed Classes 15. The under-representation of certain districts and the over-representation of others should be rectified on the basis of population. There should be a committee to adjust seats between different classes and interests. The requirement of a residential qualification for a candidate should be removed.

(7)—Lucknow Pact is not a permanent settlement and cannot prevent consideration of the questions arising out of it afresh and on their own merits.

(8)—There should be no second chamber in the Province.

(9)—The Legislature should have the power of appointing and removing the President, of defining its privileges and regulating its procedure. Sections 72d and 80c of the Government of India Act should be removed from the Statute. The Legislature should have the power to move " a motion of non-confidence." The Legislature should have the power to alter the constitution subject to certain conditions.

(10)—There should be complete provincial autonomy. The division of functions between Central and Provincial should be reconsidered with a view to do away with the control of the Central Government now operating through the system of previous sanction and subsequent veto.

(11)—Within the limits fixed by the functions assigned to the Provincial Government, the relations between that Government and the Home Government should be direct and not through the medium of the Central Government. Section 3 of the Government of India Act should be deleted as it obscures the position of the Crown in relation to the governance of India.

(12)—There should be a distinct Provincial Civil Service, and the Secretary of State should cease altogether to perform the function of a recruiting agency. His

functions regarding the Services may be performed by a Provincial Civil Service Commission or by an officer acting conjointly with the Public Service Commission of India. Indianization of Services should be more rapid. Its pace should vary with the nature of the different departments of State. Indianization should be accompanied by a different scale of salary and allowances. In the course of Indianization of the services, arrangement should be made for the fulfilment of claims of the backward classes.

III

The two principal strands of political thought in India, at the present moment, are Dominion Status and National Independence. The issue is between these two, and the soundness of British statesmanship will depend upon its character to strengthen all those forces which make for the maintenance of the British connection, not, indeed, by force, but by the free will of the Indian people. But though these are the two main thought-forces working in the country, the political situation is not free from other elements. Revolutionism, which seeks to overthrow British rule by methods of violence, and the first distinct manifestation of which took place more than twenty years ago in Bengal, is still more or less active. Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent non-co-operation movement produced a wholesome effect on the protagonists of Revolution, and, so long as the movement bid fair to succeed, the current of Indian politics flowed on such lofty hills of idealism that its pellucid waters were not poisoned by revolutionary acts of violence. With the sudden collapse of non-co-operation, however, came reaction; and Revolutionism again reared its

head, leading to the renewal of violent and terrorist activities. The Government have, from time to time, adopted strong measures to put down the revolutionary movement; but, notwithstanding all those measures, it seems to be feeding on the grave discontent prevailing in the country, owing to various causes, including the disregard shown by British Government for the passion for political equality dominant among the people of India.

This revolutionary movement is an old one. But it would seem that, recently, Russian Communism has cast its spell over some minds and spread its tentacles over them. It is impossible, for those who are not in the know, to form any fair idea of the nature and extent of communistic activities in India. But there seems no doubt that Russian communists have spread their net far and wide. Their avowed object is to destroy British Imperialism, and, bring, if possible, all Asia within the fold of the communistic world-wide organisation. Literature, presenting the best side of the Russian Revolution and of Russia under Soviet regime, is freely flowing into the country, and is being read with the same avidity with which educated Indians in the eighties of the last century used to read the political writings of Mill, Morley and Spencer. What wonder is there if all this has had its inevitable effect, and some Indians have caught the spirit of Leninism, and organised a movement for overthrowing British rule and reconstructing the Indian political, social and economic order on the revolutionary

principles of communism? When Prof. Laski, one of the few brightest stars that have, within recent years, appeared on the firmament of political thought in Europe, says, in his fine, critical monograph on "Communism", that "communism has made its way by its idealism and not its realism, by its spiritual promise, not its materialistic prospect," and that "mankind in history has been amazingly responsive to any creed which builds its temple upon spiritual heights," and declares that "the answer to the new faith is not the persecution of those who worship in its sanctuary, but the proof that those who do not share its convictions can scan an horizon not less splendid in the prospect it envisions nor less compelling in the allegiance it invokes", what wonder is there if some men in India are drawn towards the new Dispensation, and aim at the regeneration of this country by the same principles and methods which, apparently, seem to have met with such remarkable success in Russia? According to the information which, the Government allege, they have in their possession, the communist movement has already spread so much as to become a grave political danger, which it would be suicidal folly to ignore or trifle with. They are taking steps to meet it, and have launched a prosecution against a number of men, believed to be communists, for conspiracy against British rule. One interesting feature of this prosecution is that, perhaps, for the first time in the history of criminal trials in India, Britishers are placed in the

dock along with Indians for a serious political offence. The trial may, perhaps, throw a flood of light upon the real character and extent of communist activities in India. But whatever may be its outcome, the existence of the movement need cause no surprise whatever. But it is obvious that, though it may find the Indian soil unfavourable to its growth, it must result in swelling the rising tide of anti-British feeling.

IV

The general elections in Great Britain, which took place in May last, resulted in giving the Labour Party the largest number of seats in the House of Commons; and Mr. Baldwin, the Conservative Prime Minister, having resigned, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the leader of the Labour Party, was called upon by His Majesty to form the Government. Mr. Wedgwood Benn was appointed the new Secretary of State for India. Such has been the distrust of all British political parties in India, and such the prejudice against the Labour Party owing to its unsympathetic Indian policy when it came into office in 1924, and, also, owing to the support it gave to Lord Birkenhead's scheme of the Indian Statutory Commission, that its accession to power did not give rise to any hopes or expectations among the Indian people. Though some optimistic and far-seeing politicians, for various reasons, welcomed the formation of the Labour Government, as calculated to have far-reaching consequences, not only on the course of Indian politics, but also on the future development

of all movements tending towards World-Peace and World-Federation, the general feeling among the Indian people was that the British, to whatever political party they might belong, were, after all, chips of the same block, and that, so far as India was concerned, it made not the slightest difference whether the Conservatives, the Liberals or the Labourites were in power. The Bombay Legislative Council passed a resolution of greetings to the Labour Government; but no other Indian Legislature expressed any special satisfaction at the destinies of the British Empire being presided over by the People's Party; and, even in the Bombay Legislative Council, some members did not like that even so much courtesy should be shown to the new Government. In moving the resolution of greetings in the Bombay Legislative Council, the present writer thus described the nature of the task of the Labour Government in India:—

The greatest task before the Labour Government, so far as India is concerned, is to bring her political peace. Her orderly and progressive development depends upon the establishment of such political peace. And it should be obvious to every man of common sense that there can be no such peace, unless the constitutional problem is satisfactorily solved, and further that no solution of the constitutional problem can be satisfactory, unless it wins the general hearty approval and support of the people of India. It is such a solution of the constitutional problem that we all urge, and we all sincerly hope that it will be given to the Labour Party to win the distinction and the credit of reaching such a solution. The political situation in India to-day is big with possibilities—possibilities which may eventuate in drawing Great Britain and India closer

together, and thereby, as His Excellency Lord Irwin recently said in his beautiful literary style, in the building of a political fabric in which India may realize her destiny and where East and West alike may freely offer their peculiar gifts for the common service of mankind, or possibilities which may give such an orientation to the course of Indian politics as will make it increasingly difficult for India and Great Britain to work together in harmony and goodwill. The whole country is astir, every community and class is awakened, new ideas and thoughts are surging over the land. Only wise and courageous statesmanship in tune with the best aspirations of India can bring about a happy solution of the Indian problem ; and in offering our greetings to the Right Hon. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour Premier, upon the accession of his party to power, we may well express our sincere hope that his Government will not spare efforts to bring political peace to India by such a solution of the Indian constitutional problem as will win for it the general hearty support of the people of India.

The new Labour Government entered on its task with great zest and independence of judgment, and soon won notable successes in international policy which enhanced its prestige, strengthened its hold upon the electorate and created a wide-spread impression that the affairs of Great Britain were in the hands of men who brought a new and broad spirit to their management. Their courageous and statesmanlike policy, particularly with regard to Egypt, which resulted in the resignation by the Imperialist and imperious High Commissioner, Lord Lloyd, of his office, and in the making of a new Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in consonance with Egyptian public opinion and sentiment, won almost universal appreciation; and the feel-

ing began gradually to dawn upon the Indian mind, that it the same new spirit could be shown in dealing with India, the settlement of her constitutional problem would not be attended with such difficulty as surrounded it at the present moment. Mr. Wedgwood Benn evidently brought a new and open mind to bear upon the consideration of the Indian political situation, and took particular care to avoid saying anything which might offend Indian sentiment and widen the gulf of misunderstanding, ill-feeling and discontent that yawned between Great Britain and India.

Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, who tried, though without success, every art to persuade Indian political leaders to give their support to the Statutory Commission and had often sought to minimize the opposition they had shown to it, seems also to have realised that the situation called for a change of spirit and method, and that it would be impossible to work any new constitution that Parliament might ultimately enact, unless either it harmonized with India's national demand, or succeeded in winning the general approval and support of the Indian people. He went to England on a short leave, and had frequent consultations and conferences with the new Labour Indian Secretary, in the course of which he would seem to have stressed the action that should be taken to ease the existing tension, to placate Indian public opinion, to create a new atmosphere, to rally all those political parties that did not profess extreme doctrines, to weaken the movement for independ-

ence, and, if possible, to prevent the Indian National Congress from acting on the ultimatum it had given at the Calcutta session last year. It would seem, further, that he impressed upon His Majesty's Government the most ominous feature of the Indian political situation, *viz.*, that the British Government had forfeited the confidence and support of even those who had stood by them in 1921 when the non-co-operation movement had reached its apogee. It would not be wide of the mark to conclude that he urged upon the Secretary of State the necessity and expediency of rallying the Moderates, and, if the support of the Swarajists and *Independencewallas* could not be obtained on terms to which the Government could agree, of isolating them. This revival of the Morleyan policy of rallying the Moderates could not have failed to appeal to the new Labour Secretary who was himself, at one time. a follower of the great Liberal school of politics. One would like to know every detail of what passed between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy; but rulers and statesmen are often swayed by mixed motives, and it would not be surprising if the decision they reached was determined by considerations both of idealism and national self-interest.

In the meanwhile, on 16th October 1929, Sir John Simon, the Chairman of the Statutory Commission, wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, saying that their investigation into the question of constitutional development had impressed them with the necessity of

fully examining the methods by which the relationship between British India and Indian States might be adjusted. He further suggested that, in that case, it would be necessary, after the reports of the Statutory Commission and of the Indian Central Committee had been made, considered and published, to set up some sort of Conference in which His Majesty's Government would meet representatives of British India and representatives of Indian States, for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for final proposals to be submitted to Parliament.

To this communication, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the Premier, sent a reply in course of which, having approved the suggestion that the Statutory Commission might examine the wider question of the relationship between British India and the Indian States, he observed as follows :—

"His Majesty's Government are, with you, deeply sensible of the importance of thus bringing the whole problem under comprehensive review, and that under conditions which may promise to secure as great a degree of unanimity as may be practicable. His Majesty's Government are also greatly concerned to find means by which they may approach the treatment of the broad question of British Indian constitutional advance in co-operation with all those who can authoritatively speak for British Indian political opinion.

"It seems to them that both these objects can best be achieved by adoption of a procedure that will permit free representation of all points of view in advance of the stage at which His Majesty's Government will lay any proposals before Parliament, which may be expected later, to form the subject of examination by a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

"When, therefore, your Commission has submitted its report and His Majesty's Government have been able, in consultation with the Government of India, to consider these matters in the light of all materials then available, they will propose to invite representatives of different parties and interests in British India and representatives of the Indian States to meet them separatively or together, as circumstances may demand, for the purpose of conference and discussion in regard both to British Indian and All-Indian problems. It will be their earnest hope that by this means it may subsequently prove possible, on these grave issues, to submit definite proposals to Parliament which may command a wide measure of general assent."

This reply was sent with the concurrence of the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Parties. Thus, both the proposals made by the Simon Commission, *viz.*, (1) that the question of the future relations between British India and Indian States should be investigated and reported on by the Commission, and (2) that a conference should be held to reach the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals to be submitted to Parliament, received the support, not only of the Labour Government, but also of the other parties.

His Excellency Lord Irwin returned to India on 25th October 1929, and, on the *Diwali* day, that is, on 31st October, issued, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, a statement in which, after pointing out that it would be both impossible and improper to anticipate, before the report of the Statutory Commission was published and considered, what the final proposals of reform to be laid before Parliament would be,

and that with regard to such proposals, every British party was bound to preserve to itself complete freedom of action, he announced the decision reached by His Majesty's Government to hold a Conference. He reiterated what he had said before, in his address to the Legislative Assembly in the last Budget Session, that it was as unprofitable to deny the right of Parliament to form its free and deliberate judgment, as it would be short-sighted of Parliament to underrate the importance of trying to reach a solution which might carry the willing assent of political India.

But the most important part of the Viceregal statement is, not only the announcement of the decision of His Majesty's Government to reach, as far as possible, an agreed solution of India's constitutional problem, but the declaration with regard to the goal of British policy in India. His Excellency declared :—

The goal of British policy was stated in the Declaration of August 1917 to be that of providing for "the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of British Empire." As I recently pointed out, my own instrument of instructions from the King-Emperor expressly states that it is His Majesty's will and pleasure that the plans laid by Parliament in 1919 should be the means by which British India may attain its due place among his Dominions. Ministers of the Crown, moreover, have, more than once, publicly declared that it is the desire of the British Government that India should, in the fullness of time, take her place in the Empire in equal partnership with the Dominions. But in view of the doubts which have been

expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government, in enacting the Statute of 1919, I am authorized, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to state clearly that, in their judgment, it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status.

His Excellency concluded as follows:—

"It is not necessary for me to say how greatly I trust that the action of His Majesty's Government may evoke response from, and enlist the concurrence of, all sections of opinion in India; and I believe that all who wish India well, wherever and whoever they are, desire to break through the cobwebs of mistrust that have lately clogged the relations between India and Great Britain.

"I am firmly assured that the course of action now proposed is at once the outcome of a real desire to bring to the body politic of India the touch that carries with it healing and health, and is the method by which we may best hope to handle those high matters in the way of constructive statesmanship."

The immediate effect of this statement was almost electric. The school of national independence, indeed, considered that it was a move designed to undermine the growing movement of independence. But, barring it, all sections of public opinion in India, generally, welcomed and appreciated the statement. The leaders of Bombay expressed the liberal or moderate opinion as follows:—

"We are of opinion that the declaration, that the natural issue of Indian constitutional progress is the attainment of Dominion Status, is satisfactory. We appreciate the fundamental change of procedure whereby the representatives of India will be invited to meet His

Majesty's Government in conference for the purpose of arriving at the greatest possible measure of agreement regarding the proposals to be submitted to Parliament for the attainment of Dominion Status by India and thereby reaching a solution which might carry the willing assent of political India. We trust that the representatives of India who will be invited to meet His Majesty's Government will be such as will command the confidence of the people of India."

Another statement issued by Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, Mrs. Annie Besant, Dr. Ansari, Mr. Birla, the Maharaja of Mahmudabad, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dr. Moonje, Mr. Kelkar, Mr. Sen Gupta, Mr. Vallabhai Patel and many others expressed what might be regarded as the Congress point of new. This statement was also signed by a leader of the National Independence Party, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It declared :—

We appreciate the sincerity underlying the declaration, as also the desire of the British Government to placate Indian opinion. We hope to be able to tender our co-operation to His Majesty's Government in their effort to evolve a scheme of Dominion Constitution—a constitution suitable for India's needs.

But we deem it necessary that certain acts should be done, certain points should be cleared so as to inspire trust and ensure the co-operation of the principal political organisations in the country. We consider it vital for the success of the proposed conference that

(a) A policy of general conciliation should be definitely adopted to induce a calmer atmosphere. *(b)* Political prisoners should be granted general amnesty, and *(c)* The representation of progressive political organisa-

tions should be effectively secured and that the Indian National Congress as, the largest among them, should have predominant representation.

Some doubt has been expressed about the interpretation of the paragraph in the statement made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government regarding Dominion Status.

We understand, however, that the conference, will meet, not to discuss when Dominion Status is to be established, but to frame a scheme of Dominion constitution for India.

We hope that we are not mistaken in thus interpreting the import and implications of the weighty pronouncement of His Excellency the Viceroy.

Until the new constitution comes into existence, we think it necessary that a more liberal spirit should be infused in the Government of the country, that the relations between the executive and the legislature should be brought more in harmony with the object of the proposed conference, and that greater regard should be paid to constitutional methods and practices. We hold it to be absolutely essential that the public should be made to feel that a new era has commenced even from to-day and that the new constitution is to be but a register of that fact.

Lastly, we deem it as an essential factor for the success of the conference that it should be convened as expeditiously as possible.

But while the statement was, generally, welcomed by political India, the action of His Majesty's Government in authorizing the Viceroy to issue it, was strongly criticised by a powerful section of the British Press, and, in Parliament, by the Conservative and Liberal Parties. Mr. Baldwin, indeed, was personally in favour of the idea of issuing the statement; but both his party and the Liberal Party were opposed to it; and the Government ultimately decided to issue

it in spite of their opposition. The grounds of attack were, first, that any such statement should not have been made except with the approval of the Statutory Commission, and, secondly, that the declaration that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as contemplated in the pronouncement of 20th August 1917, was Dominion Status, was so unwise as to be fraught with danger. A debate was raised on the statement in both Houses of Parliament; but its outcome, on the whole, was to justify the step the Government had taken. The position taken up by the Government as regards Dominion Status being the ultimate development of India's constitutional progress could not be seriously challenged. Lord Reading had the candour to admit that he had no objection to Dominion Status as an ideal; Mr. Baldwin spoke in a strain which seemed to show that he was anxious not so much to question the action of the Government, as to impress upon his party the soundness of the view that when India realised full responsible government, she was bound to attain Dominion Status; and though Mr. Lloyd George made the strongest attack upon the Government for issuing the statement, he, too, did not repudiate the position that the attainment of Dominion Status by India was implicit in the historic Declaration of 1917. The debate served to clarify the position; the Government assured Parliament that the conditions and qualifications as laid down in the Declaration of 1917 and in the preamble to the Government of India Act 1919, remained until they were changed by

Parliament which alone had the right to do so. But the statement could not be shaken on its merits, and the debate ended in strengthening the position of the Government. Mr. Wedgwood Benn declared in a fine fighting speech that the Birkenhead spirit no longer inspired or characterized the policy of the Government towards India, that there was a change of spirit and policy in dealing with the Indian constitutional question and that the obstacles on the path of Indian self-Government could be overcome by mutual good will and understanding. The Legislative Assembly had asked a Round Table conference to settle India's constitution; and though the new Labour Government have not promised, and could not promise, that they would give full effect to the proposals that might be made by Indian representatives at the Conference, there can be no doubt whatever that in deciding to hold the Conference, they have taken an important step which, it is to be earnestly hoped, will lead to a satisfactory settlement of the constitutional problem. India is evidently on the eve of momentous changes and developments.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FUTURE

I

INDIA has now reached a stage in her struggle for *Swaraj*, in which it seems almost certain that the relations between Great Britain and herself will either be permanently placed on a satisfactory basis, or strained still further with the result that the movement for national independence will increase in strength. There can be no doubt that the decision of His Majesty's Government to hold a Round Table Conference to discuss the question of constitutional reforms, with a view to formulating proposals to be subsequently laid before Parliament, is a wise one. But everything depends upon the terms of reference to the Conference, and the success of its deliberations. It is obvious that the terms must be quite comprehensive; they must, above all, include the question of the immediate establishment of responsible government and Dominion Status. They must not be based on the principle of 'the gradualness' of progress, of constitutional advance by stages or in instalments to be determined by Parliament from time to time. The conditions and qualifications laid down in the Declaration of 1917 and in the preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919, for the full realisation of responsible

government, must not be insisted on; and the question of the immediate establishment of responsible government must not be excluded from the purview of the Conference. If this question is not included in the terms of reference, the Conference is foredoomed to failure. Political India will, in that case, be perfectly justified in boycotting it just as she boycotted the Statutory Commission.. The assumption that India is not yet ripe for full responsible government, and, therefore, the scheme of reforms to be formulated for adoption by Parliament must necessarily fall short of it is one which she cannot, and will not, accept; and if the Conference is to enter on its task on this basis, it is no use convening it at all, as, in that case, leaders of political India will be bound to refuse to take part in it. The first condition, then, of the success of the Conference is that it must be quite open to it to consider the question of the immediate establishment of full responsible government. This is such an obvious condition of India's co-operation and of the success of the Conference, that it will be extremely strange if the question is not included in the terms of reference.

But this is not the only condition upon which the success of the Conference depends. It must be a heart-to-heart Conference of equals and friends, meeting together to solve, in all sincerity and with the perfect goodwill, one of the biggest problems which the British Government have to face, upon the satisfactory decision of which hang great issues involving, not only

the well-being, progress and happiness of three hundred millions of the world's population, but also the supreme ends of international peace, harmony and solidarity. As long as India is denied her full political status, and, consequently, as she continues to seethe with unrest and discontent which naturally excite foreign ambition, hatred and intrigue, international peace is an impossibility. The great issues involved in the outcome of the Conference must be fully and keenly realized; and the British Government must be animated by an honest and single-minded determination to solve the Indian problem once for all, and, thereby, to bring peace, contentment and prosperity to a great ancient land. The British Government and the representatives of the Indian Princes must place all their cards on the table; there must be the freest and frankest exchange of views; all the difficulties of the problem must be courageously faced with the sole desire of overcoming them as far as possible. There must be no mental reservations, no desire to get the better of any party, no trace of unstraightforward diplomacy, of the Machiavellian spirit or method. Indian political leaders are not diplomatists; they are innocent of the subtle arts of diplomacy; nor are they skilled in the methods of negotiation. The conditions which they seek to impose beforehand, and the stubbornness which they sometimes show, and which appears so unreasonable to the Government and British statesmen, are really due to the

fear they naturally feel, that, in a face-to-face conference, their lack of training in the fine arts and methods of negotiation may place them at a disadvantage. No attempt must be made to take the slightest advantage of this lack of training. Fortunately, the Government with which Indian representatives have to deal is a Labour Government which, while it may be credited with greater desire to play the game, has yet to come up to the level of the Conservative or Liberal statesmen in the fine arts of diplomacy and negotiation. The avowed policy of the Labour Party should also facilitate free communion of spirit and a better mutual understanding.

On the other hand, Indian political leaders must realize the prodigious responsibility that now rests on them. Assuming that the terms of reference to the Conference are satisfactory, it is their clear duty to join it in the proper spirit, and make the best use of the opportunity they have got of proving and justifying India's claim to the immediate grant of responsible Government and Dominion Status. If the terms of reference are not satisfactory, they will, of course, be justified, as we have already said, in having nothing to do with it. But if they are, the policy of non-participation will be foolish and suicidal. Nor will it be wise to insist on difficult or unnecessary conditions before offering co-operation. The dominant question is the immediate attainment of *Swaraj*; while *Swaraj* cannot wait, every other question, however important in itself it may be, can afford to do so. The imposition

of conditions to which the Government may not be able to agree, or which may add to their difficulties in a Parliament in which they have to face a powerful opposition, must not be allowed to impair the chances of the immediate realization of our political goal. Provided that the Conference is permitted to consider the question of the immediate attainment of responsible Government, it will be a grave blunder on our part, if we do not offer the sincerest and most unreserved response to the gesture of the Government. Political amnesty and other things are bound to come afterwards, if the Conference is successful ; it will be a wrong policy to insist on them as pre-requisite conditions of co-operation.

The first thing that must be done is to adjust our internal differences. It is no use appealing to the principle of national self-determination, and asking the Government to act up to it, if India herself will speak with many discordant voices. If we cannot agree among ourselves, the right of final decision must necessarily—no less morally than legally—belong to the British Parliament; and then to question that right is ridiculous. On the other hand, if we settle our differences, and our representatives, who may be invited to the Conference, are able to speak with one voice, and to press a common constitutional scheme, Parliament will find it extremely difficult, if not imposible, to defy the Indian national will and reject our united demand. And if it does, India will be justified in seeking to enforce her will by every

fair means, however strong or drastic it may be. With India's national will defied, and her united, national demand rejected, is it possible to arrest the movement for national independence? That movement may not succeed in the long run; the history of Ireland may, perhaps, be repeated; after a long and bitter struggle, the Government may be persuaded to do what may and should be done now. But what will be the price that will have to be paid in the meanwhile? What right have the British Government and Parliament to demand that price, or to make its payment inevitable? No nation will be morally justified in prolonging its overlordship or supremacy over another at such a heavy price, involving the flaring up of some of the worst passions of which human nature is capable. Even from considerations of what the British consider to be the best solution from their own point of view, much less for the maintenance of vested national interests, or for mere *amour-propre*, to demand such a price will not only be an act of grave injustice, but also be utterly opposed to canons that, as our experience during and since the Great War has clearly shown, are the only right canons that ought to govern the relations of a great enlightened Power with a dependency that is struggling to be free, and seeking to realize its fullest national self-development. Liberalism and magnanimity are the best policy in such a case. The moral effect of the settlement of our own differences and of the formulation of India's general will, to use a Rousseauite expression, as regards our political

status, will be tremendous. It will be the greatest and most conclusive proof we can give of our capacity for self-government. The achievement of unity regarding the constitution we want, will be the consummation of our nationhood; it will always stand us in good stead in future. All the communities in India have to create common traditions and a common history, and the formulation of a constitution to which all of them agree will be an historical achievement which will go to make that history and those traditions, and to which we can all look with satisfaction and pride. Fortunately, our differences are not of a fundamental or radical nature; they do not concern the question of the immediate transfer of all political power and responsibility from the British democracy to the Indian electorate; they relate mainly to the question of communal representation. On the basic issue of the immediate grant of full responsible government, there is no cleavage of opinion between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Political India is, on the whole, agreed that the immediate grant of full responsible government would be quite justified. There may be differences of a minor character as regards the exact system of responsible government that should be introduced. Some may think that the residuary power in a Federal India should be vested in the State Governments and not in the Federal Government; others may hold the contrary opinion. The allocation of subjects and sources of revenue between the Central

and Provincial Governments may admit of differences of opinion. Second Chambers in provinces may appeal to some as essential; others may consider them as costly superfluities, if not positive clogs to progress. Adult suffrage may be advocated by some; others may think that, if it is at once introduced, the electoral machinery will break down. But all these differences do not touch the essence of the problem; they do not arouse feeling and are, therefore, easily capable of adjustment. They are, besides, indicative of an intellectual activity which is itself essential to the proper working of responsible government. The problems of self-government and democracy all over the world are such that they naturally call for freedom of thought and produce diversity of opinion.

The great question on which India is divided is the question of communal representation. It is not a purely intellectual question, since it is bound up with the feelings of communities; and unless its solution gives general satisfaction, the relations subsisting between them may not be friendly, and, in consequence, the working of responsible government itself may be adversely affected. It is, therefore, essential that an agreement on this question should be reached. Judged on its merits, the solution proposed by the Nehru Committee is, as we have already said, the best. But a considerable section of Muslim opinion is strongly opposed to it; and unless it can be persuaded to accept it, wise statesmanship demands that in the interests of unity which ought to be the decisive

consideration, efforts should be made to reach another solution which might receive the support of the majority of the Muslim community. If these efforts fail and if our Muslim countrymen, as a community, still desire the retention of communal electorates, their wishes should be respected, and all should agree to the continuance of the existing system of communal representation. A new system of representation should not be imposed upon the Muslim community or any other minority against its wishes. A system of representation which provides for communal electorates is far from perfect; in the long run, it must be abolished and replaced by a system of joint electorates. But it must be remembered that no system of representation has yet been devised in any country, which is not free from defects. Communal electorates under a system of full responsible government will not produce such evil consequences as some people attribute to them; and when all the communities co-operate in working responsible government, time will surely come, in the very process of national evolution, when those who are now bent upon retaining such electorates will themselves realize that they may safely be abolished. Full responsible government with communal electorates is to be preferred to joint electorates without full responsible government. The question of communal representation is not one on which India should be divided; it is not worth while doing so. Astute statesmanship, bent upon dividing India, and taking advantage of her

divisions, may well emphasize the evils of communal electorates and even exaggerate them, knowing full well that Moslem feeling on this question is so keen that the Moslem community will not agree to joint electorates. But we must realize that, however desirable it may be to do away with communal electorates, if time is not yet ripe for it, national unity should not be sacrificed on the altar of a better, but, for the present, impracticable system. The achievement of national unity is infinitely more urgent than the abolition of communal electorates. Indian representatives should go to the Conference fully agreed on this question ; it should not be left to the arbitrament of Parliament.

II

Illiberal and unprogressive sections of British opinion are marshalling their forces, not only against the grant of responsible government, but also against any large and substantial constitutional advance at all. They seem to think that the next step on the path of constitutional progress should not go beyond provincial responsible government ; and some of them would even like that the subject of Law and Order should continue to be reserved as at present. They do not care for Indian opinion or sentiment; they do not think that Indian agitation, or the Indian movement for national independence, will ever be so powerful as to be able to wrest *Swaraj* or Dominion Status from England. They believe in perpetuating British domination in India, and in the last resort, rely upon military

force for maintaining it. The leaders and representatives of these forces defeated the late Mr. Montagu's policy, and made the failure of his reforms inevitable. Will Parliament allow itself to be seriously influenced by the wild and foolish counsels and propaganda of such men ? It will be a grave disaster both for England and India if it does. India will, in that case, consider it a point of national honour to carry on the struggle to the bitter end, even though she may, in the long run, be wiped out of existence. India may be ruled for ever by the sword ; but the sword will bring peace neither to England nor to India It is such men that are greater enemies of British rule and the British connection than even the Indian revolutionaries, or those Indians who want national independence. They misread Indian history and do not realize its true trend. It is true that, since the days of Alexander the Great, India has been, more than once, conquered by foreigners ; but never has she willingly or cheerfully accepted or acquiesced in foreign rule. The spirit of resistance has always burnt within her breast. Alexander's Indian empire threw off the Macedonian yoke, as soon as he died, and circumstances became favourable. Seleucus Nikator wished to emulate the exploits of Alexander, but had to sue for peace with the great Emperor of Magadha, Chandragupta, or Sandracottus of Greek writers. There was a perpetual movement against Muslim rule which ultimately collapsed like a house of cards. It may be said that India has, on the whole, accepted

British rule with comparative cheerfulness and willingness. This is quite true, but it is because British rule has been a progressive force, holding out the hope of the fullest national self-realisation under the *ægis* of the British Crown. If and when that hope is dashed to the ground, history may repeat itself, the innate spirit of patriotism and resistance may assert itself, and there will be an end to all progress and development on peaceful lines.

But the British democracy, upon which the lessons of the Great War do not seem to have been lost, and which would seem to be responding, slowly, it may be, but surely, to the higher ethical and spiritual thought and influences of the East, is not likely to be swayed by such reactionary and suicidal movements of opinion and propaganda. The key to the situation lies, in one sense, in the hands of the Simon Commission, and, in another, with the new Labour Government. If the recommendations of the Commission are liberal and advanced enough to satisfy political India, it will be all smooth sailing, and no serious political storm need be apprehended. The Birkenheads, the O'Dwyers, the Sydenhams will then all be utterly routed; they will be absolutely impotent for mischief or harm. But if those recommendations are not such as to satisfy Indian public opinion, what will be the attitude of the Labour Government? Will they override the proposals of the Commission, and accept those which may be pressed at the Round Table Conference? Or will they take

shelter behind the plea that the Indian question must not be made a party question, thereby making the Conference a mere farce, and its deliberations, a mockery? No good purpose can be served by the Conference, if the Labour Government will have no intention of going beyond the recommendations of the Commission, in case India is not satisfied with them. The Conservative and Liberal Parties may make a common cause, rally round the report of the Commission, and oppose any attempt to go beyond it. What will the Labour Government do in that case? They will then be on their trial. The theory that no Indian question, however important and urgent, should be made the battle-cry of a party may be comfortable; but, in that case, what is the use of formulating and avowing a distinctive party policy and programme with regard to India? The Labour Party's policy concerning India has been defined as follows:—

> "With regard to India, the Labour Party's official programme lays it down that the Indian people have a right to self-government and self-determination, and that the party's policy would be one of continuous co-operation with them with the object of establishing India at the earliest possible moment and with her consent, as an equal partner with other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

And Mr. MacDonald himself has declared that he hoped to see India become a Dominion within a few months rather than a few years.

These declarations of party policy must sound as hollow, if India is kept outside party politics, and

no real effort is made to give effect to them. The theory that Indian questions must not be made party questions means that the Labour Government will never endeavour to give statutory effect to their distinctive Indian programme, if and as long as the other parties cannot be persuaded to make that programme also their own. It means that the Labour Party would work out its Indian policy on lines of the least resistance, in other words, that it would introduce only such reforms as receive the approval of the other parties. And as the other parties are definitely committed to the view, that India would not be ripe for full responsible Government for many years to come, and that the attainment of that goal must be gradual, by stages to be determined from to time by Parliament, it is obvious that accord ing to this theory, India must wait for the realization of her ideal of *Swaraj*, until the Liberal and Conservative Parties decide that the time is come for the establishment of full responsible Government, that is, it is difficult to say, for how many years longer. Are the Labour Government going to accept this position?

If the recommendations of the Simon Commission do not give satisfaction to Indian public opinion, and if, in that case, the proposals of the Round Table Conference go beyond them, there are three alternatives possible, *viz.*, (1) to persuade the other parties to agree to the proposals made by the Conference; (2) to reject them, in case the agreement of the other parties-

cannot be secured ; and (3) to try to carry them out, in spite of the opposition of those parties, in other words, to make the question of Indian constitutional reform, a party question.

It would be a great, though agreeable surprise, if the Conservative and Liberal Parties agree to those proposals. It does not seem likely, though it is conceivable that in case the Labour Government decides to make the question a party question, and to appeal to the country thereon, and there is the possibility of the Labour Party again coming to power with increased strength, they may be willing to avoid a fresh election, and therefore to agree to them.

Leaving aside the first alternative, it is obvious that if the Labour Government accepts the second in preference to the third, the situation in India is bound to become worse, and all hope of a peaceful settlement must be given up. India will become a second Ireland or Egypt: and when once the Rubicon is crossed, it will be difficult to foresee the course of events.

It is true that the Labour Party has no clear majority in Parliament. But it has begun exceedingly well; it has infused a new spirit both in national and international politics; and the notable successes it has already won have enormously enhanced its prestige. The leading members of the Labour Government are men of superior calibre, of whom any country and any party might well be proud. The younger generations in Great Britain seem to have Labour propensities;

the Labour policy and programme are, on the whole, so true to a sound philosophy of life, that their appeal to young men and women is bound to be strong. If, therefore, the Labour Government take courage in both their hands, and decide to take up a strong and firm attitude with regard to India, making it clear that it is both politically unwise and morally reprehensible to withhold any longer from India what she demands, it is not at all unlikely that they will receive the fullest support of the electors. The shibboleth "Outside party politics" must be given up, and the Labour Government must not hesitate to make India a party question, in case the Conservative and Liberal Parties will not be prepared to come in a line with their own policy and programme. India will, then, at least know what is the real attitude of the British democracy towards her. At present, the doctrine of "no party question" makes it impossible for her to know whether or not the majority of the British electors are in favour of her demand for the immediate establishment of full responsible government. There is every possibility that the British Democracy will endorse the Labour Government's proposal to meet the demands of India. At all events, loyalty to their pledged policy and programme, as also regard for India's National Will, demand that an appeal to the country should be made, if necessary. Grave issues, at times, necessitate bold action; and it is such action alone that saves the situation.

III

In the debate in the House of Commons on the Viceroy's Declaration on 7th November, Mr. Baldwin, the leader of the Conservative Party, made a great speech marked by a deep sense of the Divine Mystery in bringing the Indians and the English together, once again, after a long, long separation. "Ages and ages ago," he said, "there sat, side by side, the ancestors of the English people and of the Rajputs and Brahmans. Now, after ages, the children of that ancestry have been brought together by Providence to set themselves to solve the most difficult problem ever set to any people in the history of the world. The mystery and romance of a coincidence of real life have far transcended that of fiction, and this had often struck him as one of the strangest and most romantic coincidences that entered into our public life. Those who went West and North found their political energies called forth, while the tropical climate called forth the passive meditative qualities of that great Aryan branch which moved down into India. The difference between them might be illustrated by two proverbs, one, the Hindu proverb, "Life is but a journey from one village to another, and not a resting-place;" the other, a proverb seen in business at Manchester. "This is a house of business, and go about your business. Leave other people to do their business." Mr. Gandhi would find it as difficult to understand the last quotation as Lord Rothermere to understand the first." The coming together of the British and the Indian people,

in the relation of rulers and the ruled, cannot but impress the religious-minded man, as the working of Providence. Those who see the hand of Providence in unfoldment of history cannot view the establishment of British rule in India as a mere fortuitous event having no spiritual meaning or significance, or historical purpose. Great Indians, like the late Mr. Justice Ranade and the late Mr. Gokhale, have, like Mr. Baldwin, realized the providential character of the British connection. But if we see the Divine in a historical phenomenon or event, let us see it wholly and completely. Let us not see only that part or aspect of it which may suit us. The providential design in the connection between England and India cannot be otherwise than that both should attain the same political status, that both should teach and learn from each other, that each should assimilate what is good in the other, that the English should improve their civilisation in the light of the civilization of India, that the Indian people should improve their civilization in the light of the civilization of the West, that, thus, both should evolve a higher type of civilization and humanity, and, thereby, make the greatest contribution they can to the world's progress, culture and civilisation. The two branches of the great Aryan ancestry have again been brought together by Providence in order that both should work together as comrades and equals for the establishment and progress of the greatest and noblest ideals of mankind, not in order that their present relation as poli-

tical superiors and inferiors should be perpetuated or unduly prolonged. By establishing British rule in India, God said to the British" I have again brought you and the Indians together after a long separation, not in order that you should lord it over them, or exploit them, but in order that you should recognise your kinship with them, and realize that you are both flesh of the same flesh and blood of the same blood, and that it is your duty to raise them to their own level as quickly as possible, and work together, brothers as you are, for the evolution of humanity. You have been re-united, but if you go on quarelling and fighting, with each other, you shall again be separated, and perhaps, for ever," This is the real and full Divine meaning and purpose of what is undoubtedly one of the greatest and most wonderful phenomena in history. If this is not the divine meaning and purpose, it can have no Divine meaning and purpose at all.

Again, when Mr. Baldwin speaks of Mr. Gandhi finding it difficult to understand the English proverb, and of Lord Rothermere finding it difficult to understand the Hindu proverb, he, curiously enough, forgets that both Mr. Gandhi and Lord Rothermere are children of the same ancestry, and that, therefore, there can be no such incapacity for, or difficulty of, mutual understanding. The English proverb is nothing but the doctrine of doing one's duty, which forms the essence of the teachings of the *Bhagavatgita*, the Bible of the Hindus, and of which, in fact, Mahatma Gandhi's life is an embodiment; on the other hand, the

Hindu proverb is not really so alien to Western thought as Mr. Baldwin would seem to think. The Indian problem is, no doubt, difficult; is not the European problem difficult also? Many problems are difficult; but those who are oppressed by a sense of the difficulty of a problem should bear in mind the saying of the ancient Greeks that "it is not the easy things, but the difficult things, that are beautiful." Let us not exaggerate the difficulty of the Indian problem by supposing that the Indian is so different from the Briton that the two cannot understand or appreciate each other. Far from being so different, they are very much alike, thanks to their common ancestry.

IV

His Excellency Lord Irwin holds the Viceregal office at a critical moment in the history of the relations between Great Britain and India. A good deal depends upon him; he can accelerate or delay, facilitate or impede, the solution of the Indian problem. He is a man of parts, of high purpose, and evidently cherishes a noble conception of his mission in India. A religious man, like his great father, he, too, like Mr. Baldwin, sees the working of Providence in England's connection with India; he has often spoken of the building up of a political fabric in which India may realize her destiny and in which East and West alike may freely offer their peculiar gifts for the common service of mankind. His insistence on the making of the statement which he issued in the name of the British Government,

immediately after his return from England, was an act of the statesman's strength, and has distinctly raised him in the estimation of the Indian people. They expect much from him. They hope that he will not swerve from his purpose owing to the clamour of reactionaries, even though they might be of his own political party, but that, as the spokesman of India, as the exponent of her wishes and aspirations, he will stand by, and support, her demand for the immediate grant of *Swaraj*, and, thereby, strengthen the hands of the Labour Government. It is very fortunate that he has grasped the central fact in the situation, that political India must be conciliated, and reconciled to the British connection, and also realized the truth that a satisfactory solution of the constitutional question is essential to the ending of the tension between Hindus and Muslims, just as Lord Durham realized that responsible Government alone would put an end to the conflict between the English and the French in Canada. If he plainly tells his countrymen that the proposals that might be made by Indian representatives, either unanimously or by a majority. must be accepted, the task of solving the Indian problem will be rendered easier ; and a Bill embodying those proposals will not have a difficult passage through Parliament. His support of the Indian demands will be a great asset.

Such are the elements in the Indian situation : such the forces that are working. They are full o hope and promise ; unfortunately, they are also no

free from the possibility of failure and disappointment. If British statesmen and democracy rise equal to the occasion, well and good. The problem will receive a right solution ; the relations between India and England will be placed on a satisfactory basis ; the connection between them will be strengthened; and the two countries can then enter on the common task of enriching the world's civilization and making humanity better and happier. If, on the other hand, they sink under the weight of selfish interests, petty purpose, narrow vision, or sheer incapacity to understand the Indian problem in all its magnitude and with all its gravity, and seek to perpetuate or prolong a state of injustice, of unnaturalness, of wrong, our path of duty is plain before us. Our cause is just ; and we know that freedom's battle can have only one end—complete victory. India cannot die ; she shall not die. She has played a great part in the past, and shall play a greater part in the future. Her political freedom and her greatness are absolutely essential to humanity ; without them, humanity will never attain the heights of culture, of civilization, of progress, of happiness, of which it is capable. Her sons and daughters are still mighty enough to redeem her, and to become the architects of her destiny. They will welcome England's assistance ; but if it cannot be had, they will march ahead without it. Purified by the fiery ordeals through which she has passed through her long and chequered history, inspired by the faith that has never left her, and always kept her essentially

healthy and strong, and fortified by the hope that shall not fail that the attainment of her goal is drawing nearer and nearer, India will reach the promised land and realize her God-appointed destiny. England's failure will not prevent her from succeeding. Amen!

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